Conversations With Goethe in the Last Years of His Life

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ECKERMANN'S CONVERSATIONS.

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOETHE

IN THE LAST YEARS OF HIS LIFE,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

ECKERMANN.

By S. M. FULLER,
(MARCHESA OSSOLI.)

NEW EDITION.

BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE:
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

This book cannot fail to interest all who are desirous to understand the character and opinions of Goethe, or the state of literary society in Germany. The high opinion which Goethe entertained of Eckermann's fidelity, judgment, and comprehension of himself, is sufficiently proved, by his appointing him editor of his Posthumous Works. The light in which this book is regarded by the distinguished circle of which Goethe was the glory, may be seen by a reference to the first volume of Mrs. Jameson's late work, "Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada."

It is, obviously, a most faithful record. Perhaps there is no instance in which one mind has been able to give out what it received from another, so little colored by its own substance. It is true that the simple reverence, and thorough subordination

to the mind of Goethe, which make Eckermann so transparent a medium, prevent his being of any value as an interpreter. Never was satellite more completely in harmony with his ruling orb. He is merely the sounding-board to the various notes played by the master's hand; and what we find here is, to all intents and purposes, not conversation, but monologue. A finer book might be made by selections from Goethe's miscellanies; but here some subjects are brought forward on which he never wrote. The journal form gives an ease and life to the discussion, and what is wanting in fulness and beauty is made up to us by the pleasure we always take in the unpremeditated flow of thought, and in seeing what topics come up naturally with such a person as Goethe.

An imperial genius must have not only willing subjects, but good instruments. Eckermann has all the merit of an intelligent minister and a discreet secretary. He is ruled and modelled, but not blinded, by Goethe. When we look at the interesting sketch of his youthful struggles, and see what obligations he owed to Goethe, as well before as after their personal acquaintance, we cannot blame him for his boundless gratitude to the sun which chased away so many clouds from his sky. He seems, indeed, led

onward to be the foster-child and ready helper of this great man, and could not so well have filled this place, if he had kept sufficiently aloof to satisfy our pride. I say *our* pride, because we are jealous for minds which we see in this state of subordination. We feel it too dangerous to what is most valuable in character; and, rare as independence is, we cannot but ask it from all who live in the light of genius.

Still, our feeling towards Eckermann is not only kindly, but respectful. He is not ridiculous, like Boswell, for no vanity or littleness sullies his sincere enthusiasm. In these sober and enlightened days, we rebel against man-worship, even though it be hero-worship. But how could this person, so rich in natural gifts, so surrounded by what was bright, beautiful, and courtly, and at so high a point of culture, fail to be overpowering to an obscure youth, whose abilities he had been the chief means of unfolding? It could not be otherwise than that Eckermann should sit at his feet, and live on his bounty. Enough for the disciple to know how to use what he received with thoughtful gratitude. That Goethe also knew how to receive is evident from his correspondences with Zelter, Schiller, and Meyer,—

relations which show him in a better light than this with Eckermann, because the parties were on more equal terms.

Those letters, or the substance of them, will, some time, be published here. Meanwhile, the book before us has merits which they do not possess. It paints Goethe to us as he was in the midst of his family, and in his most careless or weary hours. Under such circumstances, whatever may be thought of his views, (and they are often still less suited to our public than to that of Germany,) his courteous grace, his calm wisdom and reliance on the harmony of his faith with his nature, must be felt, by the unprejudiced reader, to be beautiful and rare.

And here it may not be amiss to give some intimation (more my present limits do not permit) of the grounds on which Goethe is, to myself, an object of peculiar interest and constant study.

I hear him much assailed by those among us who know him, some few in his own language, but most from translations of "Wilhelm Meister" and "Faust." These, his two great works, in which he proposed to himself the enigma of life, and solved it after his own

fashion, were, naturally enough, selected, in preference to others, for translating. This was, for all but the translators, unfortunate, because these two, above all others, require a knowledge of the circumstances and character from which they rose, to ascertain their scope and tendency.

It is sneeringly said, "Those persons who are so fanatical for German literature always say, if you object to any of their idols, that you are not capable of appreciating them." And it is truly, though oftentimes too impatiently, said. The great movement in German literature is too recent to be duly estimated, even by those most interested to examine it. The waves have scarce yet ebbed from this new continent, and those who are visiting its shores, see so much that is new and beautiful, that of their many obligations to the phenomenon, the chief is, as yet, that of the feeling of fresh creative life at work there. No wonder that they feel vexed at those who declare, from an occasional peep through a spy-glass, that they see no new wonders for geology; that they can botanize all the flowers, and find nothing worthy of fresh attempts at classification; and that there are no birds except a few sea-gulls. Would these hasty critics but recollect how long it was before similar movements in

Italy, Spain, France, and England, found their proper place in the thoughts of other nations, they would not think fifty years' investigation too much for fifty years' growth, and would no longer provoke the ire of those who are lighting their tapers at the German torch. Meanwhile it is silly to be in a pet always; and disdainful answers have been recognized as useless since Solomon's time, or earlier. What could have been the reason they were not set aside, while that wise prince lived, once for all?

The objections usually made, though not without a foundation in truth, are such as would answer themselves on a more thorough acquaintance with the subject. In France and England there has seemed an approximation, of late, to juster views. Yet, in a recent number of "Blackwood's Magazine," has appeared an article as ignorant (and that is a strong word) as any thing that has ever been written about Goethe.

The objections, so far as I know them, may be resolved into these classes —

He is not a Christian;
He is not an Idealist;
He is not a Democrat;
He is not Schiller.

If by Christian be meant the subordination of the intellectual to the spiritual, I shall not deny that with Goethe the reverse was the case. He sought always for unity; but the want with him was chiefly one of the intellect. A creative activity was his law. He was far from insensible to spiritual beauty in the human character. He has imbodied it in its finest forms; but he merely put it in, what seemed to him, its place, as the key-stone of the social arch, and paints neither that nor any other state with partiality. Such was his creed as a writer. "I paint," he seems to say, "what I have seen; choose from it, or take it all, as you will or can." In his love of form Goethe was a Greek; constitutionally, and by the habit of his life, averse to the worship of sorrow. His God was rather the creative and upholding than the paternal spirit; his religion, that all his powers must be unfolded; his faith, "that nature could not dispense with Immortality." In the most trying occasions of his life, he referred to "the great Idea of Duty which alone can hold us upright." Renunciation, the power of sacrificing the temporary for the permanent, is a leading idea in one of his great works, "Wilhelm Meister." The thought of the Catholic Dante is repeated in his other great work, ("Faust,") where Margaret, by her innocence of heart, and the resolute aversion to the powers of dark-

ness, which her mind, in its most shattered state, does not forget, redeems not only her own soul, but that of her erring lover. The virgin Ottilia, who immolates herself to avoid the possibility of spotting her thoughts with passion, gives to that much-abused book (*Die Wahlverwandtschaften*) the pathetic moral of the pictures of the Magdalen. His two highest female characters, Natalia and Makaria, are representations of beneficence and heavenly wisdom. Iphigenia, by her steadfast truth, hallows all about her, and disarms the powers of hell. Such traits as these may be accumulated; yet it remains not the less true that Goethe was not what is called a spiritual writer. Those who cannot draw their moral for themselves had best leave his books alone; they require the power as life does. This advantage only does he give, or intend to give you, of looking at life brought into a compass convenient to your eye, by a great observer and artist, and at times when you can look uninterrupted by action, undisturbed by passion.

He was not an Idealist; that is to say, he thought not so much of what might be as what is. He did not seek to alter or exalt Nature, but merely to select from her rich stores. Here, indeed, even as an artist, he would always have stopped short of the highest

excellence, if he had not at times been inspired beyond his knowledge and his will. Had his views been different, his peculiar powers of minute, searching, and extended observation would have been much injured; as, instead of looking at objects with the single aim of ascertaining their properties, he would have examined them only to gain from them what most favored his plans. I am well satisfied that "he went the way that God and Nature called him."

He was an Aristocrat. And, in the present day, hostility arises instinctively against one who does not believe in the people, and whose tastes are in favor of a fixed external gradation. My sympathies are with the great onward movement now obvious throughout the civilized world; my hope is that we may make a fair experiment whether men can be educated to rule themselves, and communities be trusted to choose their own rulers. This is, it seems, the present tendency of the Ages; and, had I influence, I would not put a straw in the way. Yet a minority is needed to keep these liberals in check, and make them pause upon their measures long enough to know what they are doing; for, as yet, the caldron of liberty has shown a constant disposition to overboil. The artist and literary man is naturally thrown into

this body, by his need of repose, and a firm ground to work in his proper way. Certainly Goethe by nature belonged on that side; and no one, who can understand the structure of his mind, instead of judging him by his outward relations, will impute to him unworthy motives, or think he could, being what he was, hold other opinions. And is not this all which is important? The gates that keep out the water while the ship is building have their place also, as well as the ship itself, or the wind which fills the sails. To be sincere, consistent, and intelligent in what one believes is what is important; a higher power takes care of the rest.[1]

In reply to those who object to him that he is not Schiller, it may be remarked that Shakspeare was not Milton, nor Ariosto Tasso. It was, indeed, unnecessary that there should be two Schillers, one being sufficient to represent a certain class of thoughts and opinions. It would be well if the admirers of Schiller would learn from him to admire and profit by his friend and coadjutor, as he himself did.

[1] For Goethe's own view of his past conduct, and in his last days, when his life had well nigh become a part of history, see p. 413.

Schiller was wise enough to judge each nature by its own law, great enough to understand greatness of an order different from his own. He was too well aware of the value of the more beautiful existences to quarrel with the rose for not being a lily, the eagle for not being a swan.

I am not fanatical as to the benefits to be derived from the study of German literature. I suppose, indeed, that there lie the life and learning of the century, and that he who does not go to those sources can have no just notion of the workings of the spirit in the European world these last fifty years or more; but my tastes are often displeased by German writers, even by Goethe — of German writers the most English and most Greek. To cultivate the tastes, we must go to another school; but I wish that we could learn from the Germans habits of more liberal criticism, and leave this way of judging from comparison or personal predilections. If we must draw parallels, we ought to be sure that we are capable of a love for all greatness as fervent as that of Plutarch's time. Perhaps it may be answered that the comparison between Goethe and Schiller began in Germany: it did so, but arose there from circumstances with which we have nothing to do. Generally, the wise German criticises with the positive

degree, and is well aware of the danger in using the comparative.

For the rest, no one who has a higher aim in reading German books than mere amusement; no one who knows what it is to become acquainted with a literature as literature, in its history of mutual influences, diverse yet harmonious tendencies, can leave aside either Schiller or Goethe; but far, far least the latter. It would be leaving Augustus Cæsar out of the history of Rome because he was not Brutus.

Having now confessed to what Goethe is not, I would indicate, as briefly as possible, what, to me, he is.

Most valuable as a means of balancing the judgment and suggesting thought from his antagonism to the spirit of the age. He prefers the perfecting of the few to the slight improvement of the many. He believes more in man than men, effort than success, thought than action, nature than providence. He does not insist on my believing with him. I would go up often into this fortress, and look from its battlements, to see how goes the fight below. I need not

fear to be detained. He knows himself too well to ask any thing of another except to know him.

As one of the finest lyric poets of modern times. Bards are also prophets; and woe to those who refuse to hear the singer, to tender him the golden cup of homage. Their punishment is in their fault.

As the best writer of the German language, who has availed himself of all its advantages of richness and flexibility, and added to them a degree of lightness, grace, clearness, and precision, beyond any other writer of his time; who has, more than any other, tended to correct the fantastic, cumbrous, centipede style indigenous to Germany.

As a critic, on art and literature, not to be surpassed in independence, fairness, powers of sympathy, and largeness of view.

As almost the finest observer of his time of human nature, and almost as much so of external nature. He has great delicacy of penetration, and a better tact at selecting objects than almost any who has looked at the time of which I am a child. Could I omit to study this eighty years' journal of my parent's life,

traced from so commanding a position, by so sure a hand, and one informed by so keen and cultivated an eye? Where else shall we find so large a mirror, or one with so finely decorated a frame?

As a mind which has known how to reconcile individuality of character with universality of thought; a mind which, whatever be its faults, ruled and relied on itself alone; a nature which knew its law, and revolved on its proper axis, unrepenting, never bustling, always active, never stagnant, always calm.

A distinguished critic speaks of Goethe as the conqueror of his century. I believe I do not take so admiring a view of the character of Goethe as this, his only competent English critic. I refer to Mr. Carlyle. But so far as attaining the object he himself proposed, a choice of aim, a "wise limitation," and unwearied constancy in the use of means; so far as leaving behind the limbo of self-questioning uncertainty in which most who would fain think as well as act are wading, and bringing his life into an uninterrupted harmony with his thought, he did indeed conquer. He knew both what he sought and how to seek it — a great matter!

I am not a blind admirer of Goethe. I have felt

what others feel, and seen what others see. I, too, have been disturbed by his aversion to pain and isolation of heart. I also have looked in vain for the holy and heroic elements. Nor do I believe that any degree of objectivity is inconsistent with a partiality for what is noblest in individual characters. Shakspeare is a proof to the contrary. As a critic, he does not treat subjects masterly. He does not give you, at once, a central point, and make you feel the root of the matter; but you must read his essays as aggregates of thoughts, rather clustering round than unfolding the subject. In his later years, he lost his architectural vigor; and his works are built up like the piles in Piranesi's "Visions" of galleries and balconies connected only by cobweb ladders. Many of his works I feel to be fragmentary and inadequate. I am even disposed to deny him the honors most generally awarded him — those of the artist. I think he had the artist's eye, and the artist's hand, but not the artist's love of structure.

But I will stop here, and wait till the time when I shall have room to substantiate my charges. I flatter myself I have now found fault enough to prove me a worthy critic, after the usual fashion. Mostly, I prefer levelling upwards, in the way recom-

mended by Goethe in speaking of the merchants he met while travelling.[1]

While it is so undesirable that any man should receive what he has not examined, a far more frequent danger is that of flippant irreverence. Not all that the heavens contain is obvious to the unassisted eye of the careless spectator. Few men are great, almost as few able to appreciate greatness. The critics have written little upon the "Iliad," in all these ages, which Alexander would have thought worth keeping with it in his golden box. Nor Shakspeare, nor Dante, nor Calderon, has as yet found a sufficient critic, though Coleridge and the Schlegels have lived since they did. The greatness of Goethe his nation has felt for more than half a century; the world is beginning to feel it, but time may not yet have ripened his critic; especially as the grand historical standing point is the only one from which a comprehensive view could be taken of him.

Meanwhile, it is safer to take off the hat and shout *Vivat!* to the conqueror who may become

[1] See p. 192.

a permanent sovereign, than to throw stones and mud from the gutter. The star shines, and that it is with no borrowed light, his foes are his voucher. And every planet is a portent to the world; but whether for good or ill, only he can know who has science for many calculations. Not he who runs can read these books, or any books of any worth. I am content to describe him in the terms Hamlet thought sufficiently honorable to him he honored most: —

> "He was a man, *take him for all in all*,
> We shall not look upon his like again."

As such, worth our study; — and more to us than elder great men, because of our own day, and busied most with those questions which lie nearest us.

With regard to the manner in which the task of translation has been performed, I have been under some disadvantages, which should be briefly mentioned. I thought the book would be an easy one to translate, as, for a book of table-talk, so much greater liberty would be allowed, and so much less care demanded, than for a classical work, or one of science. But the wide range of topics, and the use of coterie technics, have made it more difficult, and less fit for

the amusement of leisure hours, than was expected. Some of these technics I have used as they stood, such as *motiv*, *grandiose*, and *apprehensiv*, the last-named of which I do not understand; the first, Mrs. Jameson has explained, in a note to the "Winter Studies." Generally, my acquaintance with Goethe's works, on the same subjects, makes me confident that I have the thought.

Then I was unexpectedly obliged, by ill health, to dictate a considerable part of it. I was not accustomed to this way of getting thoughts put upon paper, and do not feel as well satisfied with these pages as with those written by my own hand. I have, however, looked them over so carefully, that I think there can be no inaccuracies of consequence.

But, besides, — it being found that the two German volumes would not, by any means, make two, yet were too much for one of the present series, — it seemed necessary, in some way, to compress or curtail the book. For this purpose, passages have been omitted relating to Goethe's theory of colors. These contain accounts of experiments made by Eckermann, and remarks of Goethe's suggested by them. As the *Farbenlehre* is scarcely known here, I thought these

would not now be interesting, and that, if the work to which they refer should by and by be translated, they might to better advantage be inserted in an appendix. And I was glad to dispense with them, because I have no clear understanding of the subject, and could not have been secure of doing them justice.

I have also omitted Eckermann's meagre record of his visit to Italy, some discussions about a novel of Goethe's, not yet translated, which would scarcely be intelligible to those who have not read it, and occasionally other passages, which seemed to me expletive, or so local as to be uninteresting. I have also frequently condensed Eckermann's remarks, and sometimes, though more rarely, those of his patron.

I am aware that there is a just prejudice against paraphrastic or mutilated translations, and that, in this delicate process, I have laid myself open to much blame. But I have done it with such care, that I feel confident the substance of the work, and its essential features, will be found here, and hope, if so, that any who may be acquainted with the original, and regret omissions, will excuse them. These two rules have been observed, — not to omit even such details as snuffing the candles and walking to the

stove, (given by the good Eckermann with that truly German minuteness which, many years ago, so provoked the wit of Mr. Jeffrey,) when they seem needed to finish out the picture, either of German manners, or Goethe's relations to his friends or household. Neither has any thing been omitted which would cast either light or shade on his character. I am sure that nothing has been softened or extenuated, and believe that Goethe's manners, temper, and opinions, wear here the same aspect that they do in the original.

I have a confidence that the translation is, in the truest sense, faithful, and trust that those who find the form living and symmetrical, will not be inclined severely to censure some change in the cut or make of the garment in which it is arrayed.

JAMAICA PLAINS, *May* 23, 1839.

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ECKERMANN.

ECKERMANN.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This collection of Conversations with Goethe takes its rise chiefly from an impulse natural to my mind, to record in writing any part of my experience which strikes me as valuable or remarkable.

I felt constantly the need of instruction, not only during the earlier stages of my connection with that extraordinary man, but also after I had been living with him for years; so that I continued to fix my attention on the import of his words, and to note them down, that I might continue all my life to use them.

When I think how rich and full were the communications by which he made me so happy for a period of nine years, and how small a part I retain in writing, I seem to myself like a child who, stretching out his hands to catch the refreshing spring shower, finds that the greater part of it runs through his fingers. But, as the saying is, that each book has its destiny, and as this applies no less to the manner in which a book is produced than to its effect upon the world, so may we use it with regard to the origin of this book. Sometimes for whole months the stars were unpropitious,

and ill health, business, or various toils needful to daily existence, would prevent my adding a single line to the record; but then arose again more kindly stars, and health, leisure, and the desire to write, combined to help me a good step forwards. We must also remember, that, where persons are domesticated together, there will be intervals of indifference; and where is he who knows always how to prize the present at its due rate?

I mention these things to excuse the frequent and important chasms which the reader will find, if he read the book in chronological order. To such chasms belong many, now lost, good things, especially many favorable words spoken by Goethe of his friends, as well as of the works of various German authors, while, in the propitious days, remarks not more important with regard to others have been carefully recorded. But, as I said before, the destiny of a book influences even its origin.

For the rest, I consider what I do possess in these two volumes, and which I have some title to regard as the peculiar ornament of my own existence, with deep-felt gratitude as the gift of Providence, and have confidence that the world with which I share it will also feel gratitude towards me.

I think that these conversations not only contain many valuable explanations and instructions on science, art, and the practical affairs of life, but these sketches of Goethe, taken direct from life, will lend important aid to complete the portrait which each reader may have begun of him from an acquaintance with his manifold works.

Still I am far from imagining that the whole inner man of Goethe is here adequately portrayed. We may, with propriety, compare this extraordinary spirit and man to a many-sided diamond, which in each direction shines with a different light. And, as he turned to each person a different side, and was in each relation a different being from what he was in another, so I, too, can only say, in a very modest sense, this is *my* Goethe.

And this applies not merely to his manner of presenting himself to me, but to my incapacity for fully receiving and reproducing him. In such cases, each ray is reflected, and it is very seldom that, in passing through the individuality of another being, nothing of the original is lost, and nothing foreign interfused. The representations of the person of Goethe by Rauch, Dawe, Stieler, and David, have all a high degree of truth, and yet each bears more or less the stamp of the individuality which produced it. If this be observed of bodily things, how much more of those objects of spiritual observation which are in their nature fleeting and intangible! And as my efforts are directed to a subject of the latter description, I trust that those who, from the nature of their minds or personal acquaintance with Goethe, are fitted to judge, will not misinterpret my sincere exertions to preserve as great fidelity as was possible.

Having given what seem to me necessary explanations as to the object of this work, I have still something to add as to its import.

That which we name the True, even in relation to a single object, is by no means something little, narrow,

limited; rather is it, if something simple, yet by its nature comprehensive also, which, like all manifestations of a deep and wide-reaching natural law, cannot so very easily be expressed. It cannot be got rid of by clothing it in words, not by statements upon statements, nor the contradiction of them. Through all these, one attains only an approximation to the aim. So, for instance, Goethe's detached remarks upon poetry often have an appearance of one-sidedness, and indeed often of positive contradiction. Sometimes he lays all the stress on the material which the outward world affords; sometimes upon that which is given by the inward world of the poet: sometimes the greatest importance is attached to the subject; sometimes to the mode of treating it: sometimes all is made to depend on perfection of form; sometimes form is to be neglected, and all the attention paid to the spirit.

But all these seeming contradictions are, in fact, only successive presentations of single sides of a truth, which, by their union, manifest completely to us its existence, and guide us to a perception of its nature; and I have been careful in this, as in all similar cases, to give these seemingly contradictory remarks exactly as they were called out by different occasions, years, and hours. I confide in the insight and comprehensive power of the cultivated reader not to look at any one part by itself, but to keep his eye on the significance of the whole, and by that means to bring each particular into its proper place and relations.

Perhaps, too, the reader will find here many things which at first seem unimportant. But if, on looking deeper, he perceive that what is in itself trifling, often

serves as introduction to something of real importance, or a foundation to something which belongs to a later period, or contributes some slight but indispensable touch to a sketch of character, these will necessarily be, if not sanctified, at least excused.

And now I bid a loving farewell to my so long cherished book, wishing that its travels through the world may be a source both of benefit and pleasure to those who shall receive it.

WEIMAR, 31*st October*, 1835.

INTRODUCTION;

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR GIVES SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS PARENTAGE, HIS EARLY LIFE, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO HIS CONNECTION WITH GOETHE.

I was born at Winsen on the Lühe, a little town between Lüneburg and Hamburg, on the borders of the marsh and heath lands, in the year ninety. My parents lived in a hut, for such I may well call a small house that only had one room, with a fireplace in it, and no stairs. A ladder rose from the very door to the hayloft. I was the youngest child of a second marriage, and grew up alone under the care of parents already quite advanced in life when I was born. My elder brothers had gone to sea, and one of them was dead; my sisters were at service.

The principal means of support, possessed by our little family, was a cow. We had besides a piece of land, which supplied us with vegetables. Corn and meal we were obliged to buy. My mother was expert at spinning wool; she also gave much satisfaction by the caps she made for the women of the village, and in both ways earned some money.

My father drove a small traffic, which varied according to the seasons, and obliged him to be much from home, travelling on foot about the country. In summer, he was seen with a light wooden box on his

back, going from hamlet to hamlet, and from door to door, with ribbons, thread, and silk. For these he received in one part of the country woollen stockings, and a cloth of their manufacture, which he again disposed of on the other side of the Elbe. In the winter, he trafficked in the moors for rough quills and unbleached linen, which he sent to Hamburg. But, at all times, his gains were very small, and we lived in poverty.

My employments in childhood varied according to the season. As spring opened, and the waters of the Elbe receded, after their customary overflow, I was sent daily to collect the sedges which had been thrown up by the waters, to make litter for our cow. But when the green had at last stolen over the broad meadows, I, with other boys, passed long days in watching the cows. In summer, I had much to do in our field, and all the year through was employed to bring dry wood from thickets scarce an hour's walk from the house. At harvest time, I passed weeks as a gleaner, and when the autumn winds had shaken the trees, I gathered acorns, which I sold to those who kept geese. When I was old enough, I went with my father from hamlet to hamlet, and helped carry his bundle. This time affords some of the fairest remembrances of my youth.

Under such influences, and busied in such employments, attending, too, at certain periods, a school where I barely learned to read and write, I reached my fourteenth year. Every one will confess that from this situation to an intimate connection with Goethe was a great step, and one it seemed scarcely probable

I should ever take. I knew not that there were in the world such things as Poetry, or the Fine Arts; and, fortunately, there was no room in my life for a blind longing and striving after them.

It has been said that animals are instructed by their very organization; and so may it be said of man, that he often, by some accidental action, is taught the higher powers which slumber within him. So something now happened to me which, though insignificant in itself, gave a new turn to my life, and is therefore stamped indelibly on my memory.

I sat one evening with both my parents at a table on which a lamp was burning. My father, who had just returned from Hamburg, was talking about his business there. He loved smoking, and had brought back with him a packet of tobacco, which lay before him on the table, and had upon its wrapper the picture of a horse. This picture struck me as very good, and, as I had by me pen, ink, and a piece of paper, I was seized with an irresistible inclination to copy it. My father continued talking about Hamburg, and I, being quite unobserved, became wholly engaged in drawing the horse. When finished, it seemed to me a perfect likeness of the original, and I experienced a delight before unknown. I showed my parents what I had done, and they could not avoid praising me and expressing admiration. I passed the night in happy excitement, and almost sleepless; I thought constantly of the horse I had drawn, and longed for morning that I might look at it again.

From this time the once excited propensity was never forgotten. But as I found no help of any sort

in our place, I deemed myself most happy when our neighbor, who was a potter, lent me some outlines, which he had as models for painting his plates and dishes.

These sketches I copied very carefully with pen and ink, and the book, in which these drawings were, was passed from hand to hand, till at last it came under the eye of Meyer, Administrator of the place. He sent for me, and bestowed on me both presents and cordial praises. He asked me if I was seriously desirous to become a painter, for if so he would send me to a proper master at Hamburg. I said I was desirous, and would talk of it with my parents. But they, peasants by birth and education, and having lived in a place where scarce any occupations were followed except agriculture, and the rearing of cattle, thought of a painter only as one who paints doors and houses. They, therefore, advised me earnestly against it, saying it was not only a very dirty, but very dangerous trade, and that those who worked at it, especially in Hamburg, where the houses are seven stories high, were constantly in danger of breaking their legs or necks. As my own ideas of a painter were not more elevated at that time, I readily acquiesced, and put quite out of my head the offer of the good Administrator.

Meanwhile those persons of the upper classes, whose notice I had once attracted, did not forget me, but strove to aid me in various ways. I was permitted to take lessons with the few children of that rank; and thus learned French, a little Latin, and music: they also provided me with better clothing, and the worthy

Superintendent, Parisius, did not disdain to give me a seat at his own table.

I loved school very much, and all went on happily till my sixteenth year, when, after my confirmation, it became a serious question what should be done with me. Could I have obeyed my wishes, I should have gone to pursue my studies at a Gymnasium; but this was out of the question, as I was not only destitute of means, but felt myself imperiously called upon, as soon as possible, to get into some situation where I could not only take care of myself, but help my parents, who were so poor, and now advanced in years.

At this time a Counsellor of the place offered to take me to do copying and other little services for him, and I joyously consented. I had, during the year and a half of my school instruction, taken great pains, not only to form a good hand, but to improve in composition, so that I considered myself qualified for such a situation. This office, in which I also learned to transact some details of a lawyer's business, I kept till 1810, when old arrangements were broken up, and Winsen on the Lühe taken into the department of Lower Elbe, and incorporated with the French empire.

I then received an appointment at Lüneburg, and the following year one at Ulzen. At the close of the year 1812, I was made secretary of the Mayoralty at Bevensen, where I remained till, in the spring of 1813, the approach of the Cossacs gave us hopes of being freed from the French yoke.

I now returned home, with the intention of joining one of those companies which already were secretly

forming to fight in our country's cause. Accordingly, the last days of summer found me a volunteer in the Kielmannsegge Hussar Corps. In the regiment of Captain Knop I made the campaign of the winter of 1813–14, through Mecklenburg, Holstein, and before Hamburg, against Marshal Davoust. Afterwards we crossed the Rhine against General Maison, and passed the summer in the fertile provinces of Flanders and Brabant.

Here, at sight of the great pictures of the Netherlands, a new world opened to me; I passed whole days in churches and museums. These were the first pictures I ever saw. I understood now what was meant by being a painter. I saw the honored, happy progress of the scholar, and I could have wept that I was not permitted to pursue that path. I took my resolution at once; I became acquainted with a young artist of Tournay; I obtained black crayons and a sheet of drawing-paper of the largest size, and sat down to copy a picture. My enthusiasm supplied the deficiencies in practice and instruction. I succeeded in the outlines of the figures, and had begun to shade the whole from the left side, when marching orders broke up my happy employment. I hastened to mark the gradations of light and shade in the still unfinished parts with single characters, hoping that I might yet go on in some tranquil hour. I then rolled up my picture, and put it in a quiver, which I carried hanging at my back with my gun, all the way from Tournay to Hameln.

Here, in the autumn of 1814, the Hussar corps was disbanded. I went home; my father was dead; my

eldest sister had married, and my mother lived with her, in the house where I had been brought up. I began now to pursue my plans for drawing. I completed first the picture I had brought from Brabant; and then, as I had no proper models, I copied some little engravings of Ramberg's, with crayons, enlarging them in my copy. But now I felt the want of proper preparation. I had no idea of the anatomy either of men or animals; I knew as little how to treat properly foliage or ground; and it cost me unspeakable toil to make any thing look decently well by my own mode of proceeding.

Thus I soon saw that, if I wished to become an artist, I must set to work in a different way, and that more of this groping about in the dark would only be lost labor. Now I longed to find a suitable master, and begin from the very beginning.

The master whom I had in my eye was Ramberg, of Hanover, and it did not seem impossible for me to study with him, as a beloved friend of my earlier days lived at Hanover, who had repeatedly invited me to come to him there, and on whose assistance I could depend. So I knotted up my bundle, and took, in the winter of 1815, my walk of almost forty leagues, quite alone, over the heath and through the deep snow. I arrived at Hanover at the end of a few days, without accident

I went immediately to Ramberg, and told him my wishes. After looking at what I had done, he seemed not to doubt my talent, yet he remarked that I must have bread first; that to get acquainted with the technical part of art would demand much time, and

that any hope of making my labors profitable in the way of a subsistence lay at a great distance. Meanwhile, he showed himself willing to help me in his way as much as he could; he looked up immediately, for my first studies, drawings of parts of the human body, and gave them to me to copy.

So I lived with my friend, and drew under Ramberg. I made good progress, and found the objects of my pursuit grow daily more and more interesting. I drew every part of the human frame, and was never weary of trying to conquer the difficulties I found in the hands and feet. So passed some happy months. In May my health began to give way; in June my hands trembled so much I could no longer hold a pencil.

I consulted a physician, and he thought me in a dangerous situation. He said that I was in great danger of a fever, recommended warm baths, and similar remedies. I soon grew better, but found I must not think of resuming my late occupations. My friend had treated me constantly in the most affectionate manner; he gave no intimation, and had no thought, indeed, that I either had been, or might be, a burden to him. But I could not forget it, and such thoughts had contributed to my illness. I saw that I must take some decided course to earn a livelihood, and an appointment under the Board of Commissioners for clothing the Hanoverian army being at this time open to me, I accepted it, and gave up my devotion to Art.

My recovery was soon completed, and with a better state of body came a cheerfulness and serenity of mind to which I had long been a stranger. I found myself

able, in some measure, to requite the kindness my friends had shown me. The novelty of the services I was now called on to perform, obliged me to fix my thoughts upon them. My superiors I found men of the noblest views, and with my colleagues, some of whom had made the campaign in the same corps with me, I was soon on a footing of cordial intimacy.

Being now fairly settled, I took great pleasure in seeing whatever of good this place contained, and, when I had leisure hours, in visiting its beautiful environs. One of Ramberg's scholars, a promising young artist, was my intimate friend and constant companion. And, since I was forced to give up the practice of Art, it was a great solace that I could daily converse about it. He showed me all his designs, and I took the greatest interest in talking them over with him. He introduced me to many instructive works; I read Winckelmann and Mengs, but, for want of acquaintance with the objects which they discuss, I could only appreciate generalities in their works, and was not benefited as I might have been, if such objects could have been brought under my eye.

My friend, who had been brought up in the city, was in advance of me in every kind of mental culture, and had, what I entirely wanted, considerable acquaintance with elegant literature. At that time, Theodore Körner was the venerated hero of the day. My friend brought me the "Lyre and Sword," which made a deep impression on me, and excited my admiration. Much has been said of the artistical effect of poems, and many attach to it the highest value; but, after all,

the choice of the materials is of the first importance. Unconsciously, I experienced this in reading the "Lyre and Sword." For, that I had shared with Körner his abhorrence of those who had been our oppressors for so many years; that I too had fought for our freedom, had been familiar with those difficult marches, nightly bivouacs, outpost service, and battles, and amid them all had been filled with thoughts and feelings similar to his, — this it was which gave to these poems so deep and powerful an echo in my heart. But, as nothing impressed me much without exciting the desire to produce in the same kind, I now bethought me that I too had in earlier years written little poems without having attached any importance to the circumstance; for a certain ripeness is required for appreciation of poetical talent. This talent now appearing in Körner as something enviable and noble, I felt a great desire to try what I could do in the same department.

The return of our army from France afforded me a suitable subject, and, as my remembrances of all the soldier must undergo in the field were still fresh, I thought I might, by a forcibly-expressed comparison between his situation and that of the citizen who has remained in his comfortable home, produce feelings which would prepare for the returning troops a cordial reception.

I had several hundred copies of this poem printed at my own expense, and distributed through the town. The effect produced was favorable beyond my expectations. New and pleasant acquaintances pressed about me to declare their sympathy with the views and

feelings I had uttered, and their opinion that I had given proof of a talent which deserved further cultivation. The poem was copied into periodicals, and reprinted in many other places; I even had the pleasure of seeing it set to music by a favorite composer, though ill adapted for singing on account of its length and rhetorical style.

No week passed now in which I did not find some new occasion for a poem. I was now in my four-and-twentieth year; within me, a world of feelings, impulses, and good-will, was in full action; but I was entirely deficient in information and culture. The study of our great poets was recommended to me, especially of Schiller and Klopstock. I did read and admire, without receiving much assistance from, their works; the reason of which truly was, though I did not at that time understand it, that their path did not coincide with the natural tendency of my mind.

At this time, I first heard the name of Goethe, and got sight of a volume of his poems. In reading his poems again and again, I enjoyed a happiness which no words can express. I seemed, for the first time in my life, to be truly awake, and conscious of my existence; my own inmost soul, till then unknown even to myself, seemed to be reflected from these poems. Nowhere did I meet any merely learned or foreign matter to which my simple individual thoughts and feelings gave no response; nowhere, names of outlandish and obsolete divinities, which to me said nothing; but here I found the human heart, with its desires, its joys and sorrows. I found a German

nature, clear as the day on which I am writing these words, — pure reality in the light of a mild glorification.

I lived whole weeks and months absorbed in these poems. Then I obtained "Wilhelm Meister," and "Goethe's Life;" then his dramas. "Faust," from whose abysses of human nature and perdition, I at first, shuddering, drew back, but whose profound enigmatical character again attracted me, I read always in holidays. My admiration and love for Goethe increased daily, till I could think and speak of nothing else.

A great writer may benefit us in two ways: by revealing to us the mysteries of our own souls, or by making obvious to us the wonders of the external world. Goethe did both for me. I was led to closer observation in both ways; and the idea of unity, the harmony and completeness of each individual object within itself, and the meaning of the manifold apparitions of nature and art, opened upon me daily more and more.

After long study of this poet, and various attempts to reproduce in poetry what I had gained, I turned to some of the best writers of other times and countries, and read not only Shakspeare, but Sophocles and Homer, in excellent translations.

I soon perceived that in these sublime works I could only appreciate what is universal in humanity. For the understanding of particulars, a sort of knowledge is required, which is given by an apprenticeship in schools and universities. Indeed, I saw on every side indications that I was wasting much time and toil, for

since, without the discipline of a classical education, no poet will write in his native language with elegance and expression, or perform any thing of superior excellence. I saw, too, in the biographies of distinguished men, of which I read many at this time, how they all had recourse to schools and colleges, and determined that neither my manly age, nor the many obstacles which surrounded me, should prevent my doing the same. I engaged one of the tutors in the Hanover Gymnasium to give me private lessons in Latin and Greek, on which languages I spent all the time left me by the hours (at least six a day) claimed from me by my office.

Thus passed a year. I made good progress, yet was dissatisfied, and began to think that I went on too slowly, and should pass four or five hours daily in the Gymnasium, if I would be penetrated by the atmosphere of learning. The advice of intelligent friends favored this plan, and my superiors did not oppose it, as the hours for the Gymnasium were those in which I was usually disengaged. I applied for admission. The worthy director conducted my examination with the utmost kindness; but I did not appear as well as I deserved, not being accustomed to the routine of school questions. But, on the assurance of my teacher, that I was in fact tolerably well prepared, and in consideration of my unusual efforts, I was admitted. I need scarcely say, that a man of twenty-five, and one already employed in the king's service, made but an odd figure among mere boys, and that my situation was, at first, strange and unpleasant; but my great thirst for knowledge enabled me to overlook

all such considerations. And, on the whole, I had no cause for complaint. The tutors esteemed me, the elder and better scholars treated me in the most friendly manner, and even the most licentious abstained from playing their tricks on me.

I was very happy in the attainment of my object, and proceeded with vigor in my new path. I rose at five in the morning to prepare my lessons. At eight I went to the school, and staid till ten. Thence I hastened to my office, where I was engaged till one in my business. I then flew home, dined hastily, and then again to school. From thence I returned at four to my office, where I was occupied till seven. The remainder of the evening I gave to preparation or private instruction.

Thus lived I some months; but my strength was unequal to such exertions, and I soon experienced the truth of the saying, "No man can serve two masters." Want of free air, and of time and peace of mind for exercise, food, and sleep, gradually undermined my health, till, at last, I found myself so paralyzed, both in body and mind, that I must give up either the school or my office. As my subsistence depended on the latter, I had no choice, and left the school in the spring of 1817. As I saw it was my destiny to try many things, I did not repent of the effort I had made. Indeed, I had learned much, and continued my private lessons, still having the University in view.

Having now more leisure, I extremely enjoyed the spring and summer. I was much in the open country, and nature this year said more than ever to my heart. From this intercourse many poems took rise, in writing

which, Goethe's high example was ever floating before my thought.

This winter I began seriously to plan entering the University within a year. I was so well advanced in Latin, that I had written metrical translations of parts of Horace's Odes, Virgil's Eclogues, and Ovid's Metamorphoses, and could read, with considerable fluency, Cicero's Orations and Cæsar's Commentaries. Although much was to be done, yet I had hopes of being so far fitted that I might enter the University within a year, and there make good all my deficiencies.

My patrons in the city promised me their aid, on condition I would direct my studies towards some profession which might gain me a livelihood. But, as I felt for this no vocation, and as I was firmly convinced that man must in such matters steadily consult the wants of his nature, I could not do as they desired, and, as they would not help me on other terms, was obliged to betake myself to my own resources.

Müllner's drama of the *Schuld*, and the *Ahnfrau* of Grillparzer, were the talk of that day. These plays displeased my natural taste as works of art; still less could I relish their idea of destiny, which seemed to me likely to produce a pernicious effect on public morals. I resolved to take the other side, and show that character makes its own destiny. After thinking over my proposed piece a good year, and fashioning many parts in my mind, I wrote it out finally during the winter of 1820, in the morning hours of a few weeks. I was very happy in doing this; for the whole

flowed out easily and naturally. But, in my opposition to the above-named poets, I had my eye too steadily fixed on real life, and did not sufficiently keep in view that I was writing for a theatre. Thus it had too little action, and too much the tranquil air of a mere drawing of characters. Subordinate persons had too much room, and the whole piece too much breadth.

I showed it to some of my intimates, but was not received as I wished; they said I had read too little to be fitted for such an enterprise, and that many scenes belonged properly to the province of comedy. At first I felt aggrieved, but was, after a while, convinced that my friends were in the right, and that my piece, though not without merit, was unfit for representation. I determined to keep it by me, and remodel it when I should be more ripe for such an undertaking. My anxiety to go to the University being now greater than ever, I resolved to publish my poems, and try if I could not, by this means, gain a sufficient sum to defray my expenses. This was done by subscription, as I had not that established reputation which would enable me to secure a publisher; and, through the kindness of my friends, it had the desired effect.

My superiors, finding that my wishes were decided, gave me my dismission, and, through the kindness of the then Colonel von Berger, even allowed me a hundred and fifty dollars yearly for two years, to aid me in the prosecution of my studies.

From my poems I received a hundred and fifty dollars, after payment of all costs, and went to Göttingen in May, 1821, leaving behind a maiden whom I dearly loved.

I had failed in my first efforts to reach the University because I refused to give myself to the study of any one profession. But now, grown wiser, and feeling myself unequal to contend with the infinite obstacles of another course, I yielded to the powerful world, and chose jurisprudence.

My patrons, who thought only of my worldly prosperity, and had no idea of my intellectual wants and cravings, thought me now quite reasonable, and were liberal of kindness and assistance. They observed to me, in confirmation of my good intentions, that this study would have the greatest tendency to cultivate my mind; that I should thus gain insight into civil and social relations, such as I could attain in no other way; that this study would not engross me, or hinder my pursuing the so called higher studies; and they told me of various celebrated persons, who had studied law, and also attained great excellence in other departments. But neither my counsellors nor myself sufficiently considered that such men came to the University much better prepared than I, and had, besides, much more time to pass there than the imperious necessity of my circumstances would permit to me. By deceiving others, I succeeded in deceiving myself also, and really hoped that I might study law, and, at the same time, accomplish my own objects.

Under this illusion, I began to seek what I had no wish to possess, and found the study so easy and pleasant, that, if my head had not been already full of other plans and wishes, I could willingly have given myself up to it. But I was like a maiden, who finds abundant reasons for rejecting an advantageous mar-

riage, because she secretly cherishes a preconceived attachment.

At the professional lectures, I was often absorbed in inventing scenes and acts for a new drama. I sincerely tried to fix my attention on what was before me, but with small success. I really thought of nothing but poetry and art, and the higher human culture to attain which I had for years longed to be at the University.

Heeren was the person who did most for me during this first year at the University. His clear enunciation of his opinions in ethnography and history made his lectures delightful to me. I never left one without being penetrated with the highest admiration for this illustrious man.

Next year I proceeded in a really reasonable manner, by setting aside entirely the study of jurisprudence, one too important to be made subordinate to others, and which I could not bring myself to regard as my principal object. I devoted much of my time to philology, and was now as largely indebted to Dissen, as I had been the year before to Heeren. I not only received from his lectures the sort of food my mind most needed and desired, — not only received from him the clearest and most important instructions as to my future works, — but I had the happiness of becoming acquainted with this excellent man, and of receiving from him, in private, guidance and encouragement.

My daily intercourse with the best minds among the students, our conversations on the noblest subjects during our walks and late at night, were to me invaluable, and exercised a most favorable influence on the development of my faculties.

The end of my pecuniary means drew near. But I felt, that, during the past months, I had accumulated daily new treasures of knowledge; and to heap more together, without learning by practice how to apply it, would not have suited me. My earnest desire now was, by some literary undertaking, at once to make myself free, and sharpen my appetite for further study.

I left the University in the autumn of 1822, and took lodgings in the country near Hanover. My mind was now engaged in the thoughts which my labors had suggested to me upon the theory of Poetry. I wrote a treatise which I hoped might aid youthful talent, not only in production, but in criticising the works of others, and gave it the title of *Beyträge zur Poesie.*[1]

In May, 1823, I completed this work. As I needed not only a good publisher, but one who would pay me well, I took the resolution to send my work to Goethe, and ask him to say some words to Cotta in its favor.

Goethe was still, as formerly, the poet whom I daily looked to as my polar star, whose utterance harmonized with my thought, and led me constantly to a higher and higher point of view; whose admirable skill in treatment of such various subjects I was ever striving to understand and imitate; and towards whom my love and veneration rose to an almost impassioned height.

Soon after my arrival in Göttingen, I had sent him a copy of my poems, accompanied by a slight sketch

[1] Contributions to Poetry.

of the progress of my life and culture. I had the great joy, not only to receive in answer some lines written by his own hand, but to hear from travellers that he had a good opinion of me, and proposed noticing my work in one of the volumes of *Kunst und Alterthum.*[1]

This gave me courage to show him my manuscript now. I had, indeed, no other desire at present, than to be honored by his personal acquaintance; to attain which object, about the end of May, I set forth on foot for Weimar.

During this journey, which the heat of the weather made one of much fatigue, I was sustained by a feeling that kindly powers were guiding me, and that the step I was now taking would be one of great importance to my success in life.

[1] Art and Antiquity.

CONVERSATIONS.

CONVERSATIONS

1823.

Weimar, Tuesday, 10th June.

I ARRIVED here some days since, but did not see Goethe till to-day. He received me with great cordiality; and the impression he made on me during our interview was such, that I consider this day as the happiest of my life.

Yesterday, when I called to inquire, he said he should be glad to see me to-day, at twelve o'clock. I went at the appointed time, and found a servant waiting to conduct me to him.

The interior of the house impressed me very pleasantly; it was not showy, but simple and noble in its arrangements; the casts from antique statues, placed upon the stairs, indicated Goethe's partiality for the plastic art, and for Grecian antiquity. I saw several women busily engaged in the lower part of the house, and one of Ottilia's beautiful boys, who came frankly up to me, and looked fixedly in my face.

After I had cast a glance around, I ascended with the talkative servant to the first floor. He opened a room, on whose threshold the motto *Salve* bid me anticipate a friendly welcome. He led me through this apartment into another, somewhat more spacious,

where he requested me to wait, while he went to announce my arrival to his master. The air was cool and refreshing; on the floor was spread a carpet; the room was prettily furnished with a crimson sofa and ottomans; on one side stood a piano; and the walls were adorned with many pictures and drawings, of various sorts and sizes.

Through the open door, I saw yet another room, also hung with pictures, through which the servant had gone to announce me.

Goethe soon came in, dressed in a blue coat, and with shoes. His appearance was full of dignity, and made a surprising impression on me. But he soon put me at ease by the kindest words. We sat down on the sofa. I felt so happy, and yet so overcome, by his look and his presence, that I could say little or nothing.

He began by speaking of my manuscripts. "I have," said he, "been reading them all the morning; they need no recommendation — they recommend themselves." He praised the clearness of the statements, the flow of the thought, the solid basis on which the whole rested, and the thorough manner in which the whole subject had been thought out. "I am in haste to promote the affair," said he; "to-day I shall write to Cotta by post, and send him the parcel by the coach to-morrow." I thanked him with words and looks.

We then talked of my proposed excursion. I told him that my design was to go into the Rhineland, and stay where I could find a suitable place for writing. Meanwhile, I would go to Jena, and await Cotta's answer.

Goethe asked whether I had friends in Jena. I replied that I hoped for the acquaintance of Herr von Knebel; on which he promised me a letter which should insure me a favorable reception from that gentleman. "And, indeed," said he, "while you are in Jena, we shall be near neighbors, and can see or write to one another as often as we please."

We sat a long while together, in tranquil, affectionate harmony. I was close to him; I forgot to speak for looking at him, and yet could not look enough. His face is so powerful and brown, full of wrinkles, and each wrinkle full of expression, and every where such nobleness and firmness, such repose and greatness! He speaks in a slow, composed manner, such as you would expect from an aged monarch. You perceive by his air that he leans upon himself, and is elevated far above both praise and blame. I was extremely happy near him. I felt the blissful tranquillity of one who, after many toils and tedious expectations, finally sees his dearest wishes gratified.

He spoke, too, of my letter, and remarked that I was perfectly right in thinking, that, to manage any one affair with decision and ability, one should be fitted to act in various other departments.

"No one can tell how things may draw and turn," said he; "I have many good friends in Berlin, and thought of you in that connection." Then he smiled pleasantly at some thought which he did not express. He pointed out to me what was best worth seeing in Weimar, and said he would desire secretary Kräuter to be my cicerone. Above all, I must not fail to visit the theatre. He asked where I lodged, saying that he

should like to see me once more, and would send for me at a suitable time.

We bid an affectionate farewell. I, on my side, was supremely happy; for every word of his spoke kindness, and I felt that he had a favorable opinion of me.

Wednesday, 11th June, 1823.

This morning I received a note from Goethe, written by his own hand, desiring me to come to him. I went and staid an hour. He seemed quite a different man from that of yesterday, and had the impetuous and decided manner of a youth.

He entered, bringing two thick books. "It is not well," said he, "that you should pass from us so soon; let us become better acquainted. I wish more ample opportunity to see and talk with you. But, as the field of generalities is so wide, I have thought of something in particular, which may serve as a ground-work for intercourse. These two volumes contain the Frankfort literary notices of the years 1772 and 1773, among which are almost all my little pieces of criticism, written at that time. These are not marked; but, as you are familiar with my style and tone of thought, you will easily discriminate them from the others. I would have you examine with care these youthful productions, and tell me what you think of them. I wish to know whether they deserve a place in a future edition of my works. They stand so far from my present self, that I am not competent to judge them. But you, younger people, can tell whether they are to you of any value, and whether they suit our present literary point of view. I have had copies taken of

them already, which you can have by and by to compare with the originals. We will also take a careful survey, and ascertain whether here and there something might not be left out, or something added, with advantage, and without injuring the genuine character of the whole."

I replied that I would gladly make the attempt, and that nothing could gratify me more than adequately to fulfil his design.

"You will find yourself perfectly competent," said he, "when you have once entered on the employment; it will be very easy to you."

He then told me that he should probably set off for Marienbad in a few days, and that he should be glad if I could remain at Weimar up to that time, that we might see one another at our ease, and become better acquainted.

"I wish, too," said he, "that you should not merely pass a few days or weeks in Jena, but live there till I return from Marienbad in the autumn. Already I have written to bespeak for you a proper home, and other things necessary to make your stay convenient and pleasant.

"You will find there, in the greatest variety, means and materials for higher attainments, and a very cultivated social circle; besides, the country presents such various aspects, that you may have fifty walks, each different from the others, each pleasant, and almost all suited for undisturbed indulgence in meditation. You will find there plenty of leisure and opportunity, not only to accomplish my designs, but to write many new things for yourself."

I could make no objections to such proposals, and consented joyfully to them all. He took a very affectionate farewell of me, and fixed an hour when we might meet again, to-morrow.

Monday, 16th June, 1823.

I have now had repeated interviews with Goethe. To-day we talked principally of business. I declared my opinion also of his Frankfort criticisms, naming them echoes of his academic years, which expression seemed to please him, as marking, with some precision, the point of view from which these youthful productions should be regarded.

He gave me the first sheets of *Kunst und Alterthum*, that I might take them with me to Jena, and begin upon them as soon as I should have finished my present task.

"It is my wish," said he, "that you should study carefully these papers, and not only make a summary of their contents, but also take written notes on those subjects which do not seem to you to be satisfactorily discussed, that I may by this means see more clearly what thread I had best take up again and spin upon yet a while longer. I shall thus be greatly assisted, and you also; since, in this practical way, you will far more sharply consider, and fully receive, the import of each particular treatise, than by any common perusal, regulated solely by inclination."

I was well pleased by these remarks, and willingly undertook this labor also.

Thursday, 19th June, 1823.

I was to have gone to Jena to-day; but Goethe yesterday requested earnestly that I would stay till Sunday, and then go with the post. He gave me yesterday the promised letters of recommendation, and also one for the family of Frommann. "You will enjoy their circle," said he; "I have passed many delightful evenings there. Jean Paul, Tieck, the Schlegels, and all the other distinguished men of Germany, have visited them, and always with delight; and now you will meet there many learned men, artists, and other persons of note. In a few weeks, write to me at Marienbad, that I may know how you are going on, and how you are pleased with Jena. I have requested my son to visit you there during my absence."

I felt very grateful for so much care from Goethe, and very happy that he regarded me, and wished others should regard me, as appertaining to himself.

Saturday, 21st June, then, I bid farewell to Goethe, and set off for Jena, where I established myself in a rural dwelling, with very good, respectable people. In the family of von Knebel and Frommann, I found, on Goethe's recommendation, a very cordial reception, and instructive society. I proceeded very successfully with my work, and had, besides, the joy to receive a letter from Cotta, in which he not only declared himself ready to publish my manuscript which had been sent him, but assured me of a handsome pecuniary compensation. So was I now honorably provided with the means of subsistence for at least a year, and I felt the liveliest desire to produce something new, on

which to found my future prosperity as an author. I hoped that I had already, in my *Beyträge zur Poesie*, taken my critical and theoretical ground. I had there endeavored to bring out my opinions upon the principles of art, and my whole inner nature now urged me to test them in practice. I had plans for innumerable poems, both long and short, also for dramas of various sorts; and I thought I had now only to choose among them with judgment, and peacefully to finish one after the other.

I was not long content in Jena; my life there was too quiet and uniform. I longed for a great city, not only because I should there enjoy the advantages of a good theatre, but because I might there observe social life on a great scale, and thence draw the elements of a more complete culture. In such a town, too, I could live quite undisturbed, and be free to isolate myself when ready to produce any thing.

Meanwhile, I had drawn up the table which Goethe wished for the first four volumes of *Kunst und Alterthum*, and sent it to Marienbad with a letter, in which I told my plans and wishes. I received in answer the following lines:—

"The table arrived at the time when I most wanted it, and corresponds precisely with my wishes and intentions. Let me find the Frankfort papers equally well arranged, and receive beforehand my best thanks. Meanwhile, be assured, I shall faithfully remember and consider your situation, thoughts, wishes, aims, and plans, that, on my return, I may be ready to give my best advice as to your future conduct. To-day I will

say no more. My departure from Marienbad gives much to think of, and to do, while my stay, all too brief, with such interesting beings, must occasion painful feelings.

"May I find you in that state of tranquil activity, from which, after all, the most comprehensive views of the world, and the most valuable experiences, are evolved. Farewell. You must give me the pleasure of a prolonged and more intimate acquaintance.

"GOETHE.

"Marienbad, 19th August, 1823."

By these lines of Goethe's, on the reception of which I felt very happy, I felt tranquillized as to the future. I determined to take no step for myself, but be wholly resigned to his will and counsel. Meanwhile, I wrote some little poems, finished arranging the Frankfort papers, and expressed my opinion of them in a short treatise, intended for the eye of Goethe. I looked forward with eagerness to his return from Marienbad; for my book was almost through the press, and I felt a strong desire to refresh myself this autumn, by passing a few weeks on the banks of the Rhine.

Jena, 15th September, 1823.

Goethe is, at last, returned from Marienbad, but, as his country-house in this place is not convenient for him just now, he only staid here a few days. He is well and active, so that he can take very long walks, and it is truly delightful to see him now.

After an interchange of joyful greetings, Goethe began to speak thus:—

"I may as well say it at once;—it is my wish that you should pass this winter with me in Weimar. In poetry and criticism, I find you quite to my mind. You have, from nature, an excellent foundation. You should make of them your profession, and I doubt not you will soon derive from it a suitable income. But yet there is much, not strictly appertaining to this department, which you ought to learn, and that with all convenient speed. This you may do with us this winter in Weimar, to such advantage, that you will wonder, next Easter, to see what progress you have made. It is in my power to give you the very best means, in every way. Thus shall you lay a firm foundation for your future life, and have the pleasure of feeling yourself, in some measure, prepared for any situation."

I was much pleased by this proposal, and replied, that I would regulate myself by his wishes in all things. "Then," said Goethe, "I will provide you with a home in my neighborhood, and venture to predict that you shall pass no unprofitable moment during the winter. Many good things are collected in Weimar, and you will gradually find out, in the higher circles, society not surpassed in any of the great cities. And many men of great worth are connected with me, whom you also will know, and whose conversation you will find in the highest degree useful and instructive."

Goethe then mentioned many distinguished men, indicating in a few words the peculiar merit of each.

"You would look in vain elsewhere," said he, "for

so much good in so narrow space. We also possess an excellent library, and a theatre which yields to none in Germany, in what is most important. Therefore, — let me repeat it, — stay with us, and not only this winter, but make Weimar your home. From thence proceed avenues to all quarters of the globe. In summer you can travel, and see, by degrees, whatever is worth seeing. I have lived here fifty years; and where else have I not been? But I was always glad to return to Weimar."

I was very happy in being again with Goethe, and hearing him talk, and I felt that my whole soul turned towards him. If I can only have thee, thought I, all else will go well. So I repeated to him the assurance that I was ready to do whatever he, after duly weighing the circumstances of my situation, should think best.

Jena, Thursday, 18th September, 1823.

Yesterday, before Goethe's return to Weimar, I had the happiness of another interview with him. What he said at that time seemed to me of infinite value, and will have a beneficent influence on all my after life. All the young poets of Germany should hear those words.

He began by asking me whether I had written no poem this summer. I replied that I had indeed written a few, but had done nothing which satisfied me. "Beware," said he, "of attempting too large a work. That is what injures most our best minds, and prevents fine talents and earnest efforts from accomplishing adequate results. I have suffered from this cause, and

know how pernicious it is. What valuables I have let fall into the well! If I had written all that I well might, a hundred volumes would not contain it.

"The Present will have its rights; and the thoughts and feelings which daily press upon the poet should find a voice. But, if you have a great work in your head, nothing else prospers near it, all other thoughts must be repelled, and the pleasantness of life is quite lost, till it is accomplished. What concentration of thought is required to plan and round it off as a whole within the mind, what powers, and what a tranquil, undisturbed situation, to make it flow out as it should! If you have erred in your plan, all your toil is lost; and if, in treating so extensive a subject, you are not perfectly master of your materials, the defects in details lay you open to censure; and, after all his toil and sacrifice, the poet meets, instead of praise and pleasure, nothing but dissatisfaction and blame, which palsy his energies. But if he seizes and treats, in freshness of feeling, what the present moment offers him, he makes sure of something good, and if he does not succeed, has at least lost nothing. There is August Hagen, in Königsberg; have you ever read his *Olfried* and *Lisena?* There you may find passages which cannot be improved; the situation on the Baltic, and all the particulars of the locality, are painted with the hand of a master. But, as a whole, it pleases nobody. And what labor and strength he has lavished upon it, indeed, has almost exhausted himself. And, since, he has been writing a tragedy." Here Goethe paused, and smiled. I said I believed he had advised

Hagen (in *Kunst und Alterthum*) to treat only small subjects. "I did so," he replied; "but nobody conforms to the instructions of us old people. Each thinks he knows best about himself, and thus many lose their way entirely, and many wander long in wrong directions; and, besides, you should not wander now: we of a former day have done it long to find the true path for you; and what was the use of all our seeking and blundering, if you young people will not avail yourselves of the experience we have gained? Our errors were pardoned because no track had been opened for us; but from men of a later day the world asks more: they must not be seeking and blundering, but use the instructions of their predecessors to enter at once on the right path. It is not enough to take steps which may sometimes lead to an aim; each step must be in the right direction, and, at the same time, with each some separate object must be attained.

"Bear these words away with you, and see if you cannot from them draw somewhat for yourself. Not that I feel troubled about you, but I may be able to abridge an unprofitable stage in your progress. Fix your attention on subjects which every day offers you, and on which you can work at once with earnestness and cheerfulness; you will, in all probability, please yourself, and each day will bring its own peculiar joy. You can give what you do to the pocket-books, to the periodicals, but never submit yourself to the judgment of other minds; your own is the only true guide.

"The world is so great and rich, and life so full of variety, that you can never want occasions for poems. But they must all be occasional poems; that

is to say, reality must give both impulse and material for their production. A particular case becomes universal and poetic when managed by a poet. All my poems are occasional poems, having in real life, by which they were suggested, a firm foundation. I attach no value to poems woven from the air.

"Let no one say that reality wants poetical interest; for in this doth the poet prove his vocation, that he has the art to win from a common subject an interesting side. Reality must give the impulse, the subject, the kernel, as I may say; but to work out a beautiful, animated whole, belongs to the poet. You know Fürnstein, sometimes called the Poet of Nature; he has written the prettiest poem imaginable, on the cultivation of hops. I have now desired him to make songs for the different crafts of working-men, particularly a weaver's song, and I am sure he will do it well, for he has been brought up among such people, and understands the subject so thoroughly, that he will treat it in a masterly manner. You cannot manage a great poem so; no part can be slighted or evaded; all which belongs to it as a whole must be interwoven and represented with precision. Youth has only one-sided views of things. A great work asks many-sidedness, and on that rock the young author splits."

I said that I had contemplated writing a great poem upon the seasons, in which I might interweave the employments and amusements of all classes. "'Tis the very case," replied Goethe; "you may succeed in parts, and fail in others, with which you have had no proper means of becoming acquainted. You, perhaps, would do the fisherman well, and the huntsman ill; and

if you fail any where, the whole is a failure; and, however good single parts may be, that will not atone for the want of completeness. But paint those parts to which you are competent, give each an independent being, and you make sure of something good.

"More especially, I warn you against great inventions; for there a comprehensive view is demanded, for which youth is seldom ripe. Further, character and views are loosened as sides from the poet's mind, and he has not the fulness desirable for future productions. And, finally, much time is lost in invention, internal arrangement, and combination, for which nobody thanks you, even supposing your design be happily accomplished.

"When materials are ready to the hand, all goes easier and better. Facts and characters being provided, the poet has only the task of animating them into a whole. He preserves his proper fulness, for he needs to part with but little of himself, and there is much less loss of time and strength. Indeed, I would advise the choice of subjects which have been used before. How many Iphigenias have been written! yet they are all different, for each writer manages the subject after his own fashion.

"But, for the present, you had better lay aside all great undertakings. You have striven long enough; it is time that you should enter into the cheerful period of life. Working out small subjects will help you most at present."

During the conversation, we had been walking up and down the room. I could do nothing but assent to what he said, for I felt the truth of each word through

my whole being. At each step I felt lighter and happier, for I must confess that various grand schemes, of which I had not as yet been able to take a clear view, had been oppressing me. I have now thrown them aside, and shall let them rest till I feel adequate to working out each part in cheerfulness, as by study of the world I become more intimately acquainted with the interests it presents.

I feel, since these words of Goethe's, as if I had gone forward several years in true wisdom, and in the very depths of my soul acknowledge my good fortune in having met with a true master. Its advantages are incalculable.

How much shall I learn from him this winter! how much shall I gain merely from living with him, even in times when he does not speak upon subjects of such importance! His personality, his mere presence, it seems to me, must tend to unfold my powers, even when he speaks not a word.

Weimar, Thursday, 2d October, 1823.

I came here yesterday from Jena, favored by most agreeable weather. Goethe welcomed me to Weimar, by sending me a season-ticket for the theatre. I passed yesterday in making my domestic arrangements; and the rather, as they were very busy at Goethe's; for the French Ambassador from Frankfort, Count Reinhard, and the Prussian State Counsellor, Shultz, from Berlin, had come to visit him.

This forenoon I went again to Goethe. He was rejoiced to see me, and was every way kind and amiable. As I was about to take my leave, he said

he wished first to make me acquainted with the State Counsellor, Shultz. He took me into the next room, where I found that gentleman busy in looking at the pictures, introduced me, and then left us together.

"I am very glad," said Shultz, "that you are to stay in Weimar, and assist Goethe in preparing his unpublished works for the press. He has been telling me how much profit he promises himself from your assistance, and that he now hopes to complete many new enterprises."

I replied that I had no other aim in life except to aid the progress of German literature; and that, in the hope of being useful here, I had willingly laid aside, for the present, my own literary designs. I added, that I hoped the constant intercourse, thus induced with Goethe, would have a most favorable effect on my own culture. I hoped, by this means, to ripen much in few years, and thus, in the end, to adequately perform tasks for which I was at present but imperfectly prepared.

"Certainly," replied Shultz, "the personal influence of so extraordinary a man and master as Goethe, must be invaluable. I have come hither solely to refresh myself once more from his great mind."

He then inquired about the publication of my book; for Goethe had written to him last summer on that subject. I said that I hoped, in a few days, to receive the first copies from Jena, and would not fail to send him one.

We separated with a cordial shake of the hand.

Tuesday, 14th October, 1823.

This evening, I went for the first time to a large tea-party at Goethe's house. I arrived first, and enjoyed the view of the brilliantly lighted suite of apartments, all thrown open to-night. In one of the farthest, I found Goethe, who came to meet me, with a cheerful air. He was dressed in black, and wore his star, which became him well. No guest having yet arrived, we walked together up and down the room, where the picture of the Aldobrandine Marriage, which was hung above the red couch, especially attracted my attention. The green curtains were now drawn aside from the picture; it was in a broad light, and I was delighted to have such a good opportunity for tranquil contemplation of its beauty.

"Yes," said Goethe, "the ancients did not content themselves with great intentions merely; they knew also how to carry them into effect. We moderns have also great intentions, but want the skill and power to bring them out, full and lifelike as we thought them."

Now came Riemer, Meyer, Chancellor von Müller, and many other distinguished gentlemen and ladies of the court, Goethe's son, and Frau von Goethe, with whom I was now, for the first time, made acquainted. The rooms filled gradually, and the scene became very animated. With some pretty youthful foreigners Goethe spoke French.

The society pleased me, all were so free and perfectly at their ease; each sat or stood, laughed, jested, and talked at pleasure. I had a lively conversation with the young Goethe about Houwald's piece, which was given a few days since. We agreed entirely about it,

and I was greatly pleased by the animation and refinement of his criticisms.

Goethe made himself very agreeable. He went about from one to another, and seemed to prefer listening to talking. Frau von Goethe would often come and lean upon him, or caress him. I had lately said to him that I enjoyed the theatre highly, but that I rather gave myself up to the impression of the piece than reflected upon it. This seemed to him the method best suited to my present state of mind.

He came to me with Frau von Goethe. "I believe," said he, "you are not yet acquainted with my daughter in law. He is as much a child about the theatre as you, Ottilia!"

We exchanged congratulations upon this taste which we had in common. "My daughter," continued he, "is never absent from the theatre an evening." "That would be my way," said I, "if there were always good pieces; but it is so tiresome to sit out the bad!" "But," said Goethe, "it has a fine effect on you to be constrained to stay and hear what is bad. By this means, you are penetrated with the hatred for the bad, which gives you the clearest insight for the good. In reading, you have not this gain,—you throw aside the book, if it displeases you; but, at the theatre, you are forced to your own profit." I could not refuse my assent, and thought how always the sage finds occasion to say something good.

We now separated. Goethe went to the ladies, and I joined Riemer and Meyer, who had many things to relate of Italy. The assembly became very gay. At length Counsellor Schmidt seated himself at the piano,

and gave us some of Beethoven's music. These pieces, which were received with deep sympathy, led an intelligent lady to relate many interesting particulars of her acquaintance with the great composer. Ten o'clock came at last, and this, to me, extremely interesting evening ended.

Sunday, 19th October, 1823.

To-day, I dined for the first time with Goethe. No one was present except Frau von Goethe, her sister, Fraulein Ulrica, and little Walter. Goethe appeared now solely as father of the family, offered all dishes, carved the poultry with great dexterity, not forgetting between whiles to fill the glasses. We had much lively chat about the theatre, young English people, and other topics of the day; especially was Fraulein Ulrica very lively and entertaining. Goethe was generally silent, only offering now and then some pertinent remark. He also read the newspapers, communicating to us now and then what he thought most important, especially about the Greek cause.

There was talk about my learning English, and Goethe earnestly advised me to do so, particularly on account of Lord Byron; saying, that such a being had never before appeared, and hardly would be reproduced. After dinner, Goethe showed me some experiments relating to his theory of colors. The whole subject was new to me; I neither understood the experiments, nor what he said about them. I could only hope that I should have leisure and opportunity to inquire further into the matter.

Tuesday, 21st October

I went to see Goethe this evening. We talked of his "Pandora." I asked him whether this poem might now be regarded as a whole, or whether we were to look for something farther. He said there was no more in existence, and, indeed, that the first part was on so large a scale, that, at a later period, he could do nothing to match it. And, as what was done might be regarded as a whole, he did not trouble himself.

I said that I could not understand this difficult poem till I had read it so many times as almost to know it by heart. Goethe smiled, and said, "I can well believe that; for all its parts are, as one may say, wedged one within another." I added, that I could not be perfectly satisfied with Schubarth's remarks upon this poem, who found there united all which had been said separately in "Werther," "Wilhelm Meister," and the "Elective Affinities," thus making the interpretation difficult, and almost impossible. "Schubarth," said Goethe, "sometimes goes a little too deep, but is a man of great abilities, and his words are always fraught with deep meaning."

We spoke of Uhland, and Goethe said, "When I see great effects, I am apt to suppose great causes; and I think there must be a reason for popularity so extensive as that of Uhland. I took up his book with the best intentions, but fell immediately on so many weak and gloomy poems that I could not proceed. I then tried his ballads, where I really did find distinguished talent, and could see a basis for his celebrity."

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He was then led to speak of the ancient German architecture.

"We see in this architecture," he said, "the flower of an extraordinary crisis. Who merely looks on such a flower will feel nothing but astonishment; while he who sees into the secret, inner life of the plant, into the stirring of its powers to unfold the flower, looks with other eyes, for he knows what he sees.

"I will take care that you have means this winter of inquiring into a subject so important, that when you visit the Rhine next summer, you may not see the Minster of Strasburg and the Cathedral of Cologne in vain."

Saturday, 25th October, 1823.

At twilight, I passed half an hour with Goethe. He sat in an elbow-chair before his desk. I found him in a singularly gentle mood, as one who has attained celestial peace, or who is recalling delicious hours, whose sweetness fills his soul as when they first were his. Stadelman gave me a seat near him. We talked of the theatre, which was, indeed, one of the topics uppermost in my mind all this winter. Our subject was a piece of Raupach's, (*Erdennacht*,) which I had lately seen. I observed that the piece was not brought before us as it existed in the mind of the poet; that the Idea was too much for the Life; that it was rather lyric than dramatic; and that what was spun out through five acts might as well have been said in two or three.

I then spoke of those pieces of Kotzebue's which I had seen. I praised the quick eye for common life, the dexterity at seizing its interesting side, and repre-

senting it with force, which I found in these pieces. Goethe agreed with me. "What has kept its place for twenty years in the hearts of the people," said he, "is pretty sure to have substantial merit. When Kotzebue contented himself with his own sphere, he usually did well. 'Twas the same with him as with Chodowiecky, who always struck off admirably the scenes of common citizens' life, and as regularly failed when he attempted to paint Greek or Roman heroes."

He named several good pieces of Kotzebue's, praising most highly the two Klingsbergs. "And," said he, "none can deny that Kotzebue has been in many varied scenes of life, and ever kept both eyes open.

"Intellect, and even poetry, cannot be denied to our modern composers of tragedy; but they do not give their subject the hues of life; they strive after something beyond their powers; and for that reason I have been led to think of them as having *forced* talents;—their growth is not natural." "I doubt," said I, "whether such poets could write a prose work, and am of opinion that this would be the true test of their talents." Goethe agreed with me, adding that versification not only enhanced, but often called out poetic feeling.

We then talked of his "Journey through Frankfort and Stuttgard to Switzerland," which he has lying by him in sheets, and which he will send me, in order that I may examine it, and plan how these fragments shall be rounded into a whole. "You will see," said he, "that it was all written out from the impulse of the

moment; there was no thought of plan or artistical harmony; it was like pouring water from a bucket."

Monday, 27th October.

To-day, early, I was invited to a tea-party and concert, which were to be given at Goethe's house this evening. The servant showed me the list of guests whom he was to invite, from which I saw that the company would be large and brilliant. He said a young Polish lady, who has lately arrived here, would play on the piano. I accepted the invitation gladly.

Afterwards, the bill for the theatre was brought, and I saw that the "Chess-machine" was the piece for the evening. I knew nothing of this piece; but my landlady was so lavish in praise of it, that I was seized with a great desire to attend. Besides, I was not at my best to-day, and felt more fit to pass my evening at an entertaining comedy than to play a part in good society.

An hour before the theatre opened I went to Goethe. All was in movement throughout the house. I heard them tuning the piano, as preparation for the musical entertainment.

I found Goethe alone in his chamber; he was already dressed. I seemed to him to have arrived at the right moment. "You shall stay with me," he said, "and we will entertain one another till our friends join us." I thought, "Now shall I not be able to get away, and I am sorry; for, though it is very pleasant to be here with Goethe alone, yet, when the many to me unknown gentlemen and ladies come, I shall feel quite out of my element."

I walked up and down with Goethe. Soon we were led to talk about the theatre, and I again remarked how great a pleasure it gave me; for, having seen scarce any thing in early years, almost every piece made a fresh impression upon me. "Indeed," added I, "I feel so much about it, that I have scarcely to-day been able to resolve to give it up, even for your party."

"Well," said Goethe, stopping short, and looking at me with an expression of mingled kindness and dignity, "do not constrain yourself; if the play this evening suits you best, harmonizes most perfectly with your mood, go there. You would have good music here, and will often again have opportunity to hear it at my house." "Then," said I, "I will go; for I think it may do me good to laugh." "Stay with me, however," said Goethe, "till six o'clock; we shall have time to say a word or two."

Stadelman set two wax-lights on the table, and Goethe desired me to sit down, and he would give me something to read. And what should this be but his newest, dearest poem, his Elegy, from Marienbad!

I must here mention, that, after Goethe's return from Marienbad, the report had been spread, that he had there made the acquaintance of a young lady equally charming in mind and person, and had shown for her an even passionate admiration. When her voice was heard in the Brunnen Allee, he always seized his hat, and hastened to join her. He was constantly in her society, and there passed happy days; he had not bid her farewell without great pain, and had, in this excited state, written a beautiful poem,

which he looked upon as a consecrated thing, and kept hid from every eye.

I could easily believe all this, seeing, as I did, his youthful activity of body and mind, and the healthy freshness of his heart. I had had the most longing desire to see the poem which was now in my hands, but had never dared to speak to Goethe on the subject.

He had, with his own hand, copied these verses, in Roman characters, on fine vellum paper, and tied them with riband into a red morocco case; so that, from its garb, you might gather how decided was his preference for this poem.

I read it with great delight, and found that every line confirmed the common report. The first verse intimated that the acquaintance was not first made, but only renewed, at this time. The poem revolved constantly on its own axis, and seemed always to return to the point where it began. The close made a deep and singular impression.

As I finished, Goethe came to me again. "Well," said he, "have I not shown you something good? But you shall tell me what you think a few days hence." I was glad to be excused from saying any thing at that moment; for the impression was so new, and had been so hastily received, that I could not have made any appropriate criticism.

He promised to let me see it again in some tranquil hour. The time for the theatre had now arrived, and we separated with an affectionate pressure of the hand.

The "Chess-machine" was, perhaps, a good piece, but I saw it not, — my thoughts were with Goethe.

As I went home, I passed by his house; it was all lighted up; I heard the music from within, and regretted that I did not stay there.

The next day, I was told that the Polish lady, Madame Szymanowska, in whose honor the party was given, had played on the piano in such a style of excellence as to enchant the whole society. I learned, also, that Goethe became acquainted with her the past summer at Marienbad, and that she had now come hither for the purpose of visiting him.

At noon, Goethe sent me a little manuscript, "Studies from Zauper," in which I found many fine remarks. I sent him the poems I had written at Jena, and of which I had lately spoken to him.

Wednesday, 29th October.

This evening, I went to Goethe just as they were lighting the lamps. I found him in a very animated state of mind: his eyes sparkled in the torch-light; his whole expression was one of cheerfulness, youth, and power.

We walked up and down. He began immediately to speak of the poems which I sent him yesterday.

"I understand now," said he, "why you thought, while at Jena, of writing a poem on the seasons. I now advise you to do so, and begin with Winter. You seem to have distinguished powers of observation for natural objects.

"Only two words would I say about your poems. You stand now at that point where you ought to break through to the really high and difficult part of art, that of seizing on what is individual in objects. You have

talent, and have got a good way forward: your own will must do the rest. You were to-day at Tiefurt; that would afford a good subject for the attempt. You may perhaps observe Tiefurt for three or four visits, before you will win from it the characteristic side, and understand how to manage it; but spare not your toil; study it throughout, and then represent it. It is a worthy subject, and one which I should have used long since, but I could not; for I have lived through each event with it, and my being is so interwoven with its history, that details press upon me with over-great fulness. But you come as a stranger; let the keeper tell you all the history of that castle, and you will seize only what is prominent and significant at the present moment."

I promised to try, but confessed that this subject seemed to me out of my way, and very difficult.

"I know well," said he, "that it is difficult; but the apprehension and representation of the individual is the very life of art. Besides, while you content yourself in generalities, every one can imitate you; but, in the particular, no man can, because no man has lived exactly your life.

"And you need not fear lest what is peculiar should not meet with sympathy. Each character, however peculiar it may be, and each object which you can represent, from the stone up to man, has generality; for there is repetition every where, and there is no thing to be found only once in the world. On this step of representing what is peculiar or individual begins what we call composition."

This was not at once clear to me, though I refrained

from questions. "Perhaps," thought I, "he means the fusing of the Ideal with the Real, — the union of that which we must find without, with that which is inborn. But perhaps he means something else." Goethe continued: —

"And be sure you put to each poem the date at which you wrote it." I looked at him inquiringly. "Thus," said he, "you will gain the best of journals. I have done it for many years, and can see its use."

It was now time for the theatre. "So you are going to Finland?" called he, jestingly, after me; — for the piece was *Johann von Finland*, ("John of Finland,") by Frau von Weissenthurn.

The piece had some effective passages, but was so overloaded with pathos, and design so obvious in every part, that, on the whole, it did not impress me favorably. The last act, however, pleased and reconciled me to the rest.

This piece suggested to me the following thoughts: Characters which have been imperfectly painted by the poet, gain on the stage, because the actor, as a living man, must impart to them some sort of life and of individuality. But the finely painted characters of the great poet, which already exhibit to us a sharply marked individuality, must lose on the stage, because the actor is not throughout adapted to his part, and very few of the tribe can lay aside their own individualities. And if the actor be not the counterpart of the character, and do not possess the power of laying aside his own personality, a mixture ensues, and the character loses its harmony. Therefore, the play of a really great writer appears in its original brightness

only in points; and, by seeing it merely, you can never be in a situation to do it justice.

Monday, 3d November.

I went to Goethe at five o'clock. I heard them, as I came up stairs, laughing and talking in the dining-room. The servant said that the Polish lady dined there to-day, and they had not yet left the table. I was going away, but he said his master had left orders that they should tell him when I came, and would, perhaps, be glad of an interruption, as it was now late. So I went into Goethe's apartment, and he soon came to me in a very pleasant humor. He had wine brought, and filled for me and himself.

"Before I forget it," said he, "let me give you this ticket. Me. Szymanowska gives, to-morrow evening, a public concert at the Stadthaus, and you must not fail to be there." I replied that I certainly should not repeat my late folly. "Does she play remarkably well?" asked I. "Admirably." "As well as Hummel?" "You must remember," said Goethe, "that she is not only a fine performer, but a beautiful woman; and this lends a charm to all she does. But her execution is masterly, — astonishing indeed." "And is there genuine power, as well as dexterity?" said I. "Yes," said he, "genuine power; and that is what is most worthy of note, because you so rarely find it in what women do."

Secretary Kräuter came in to consult about the library. Goethe, when he left us, praised his fidelity and judgment.

We then talked of the papers relating to his journey

into Switzerland in 1797. I spoke of his and Meyer's reflections upon subjects of plastic art. "Ay," said Goethe, "and what can be more important than the subject, and what is all the science of art, if *that* is wanting? It is because artists in modern times have no worthy subjects, that modern art so stumbles and blunders. From this cause we all suffer. I myself must pay the penalty of my modern date.

"Very few artists have clear notions on this point, or know the things which are for their peace. For instance, they take my 'Fisherman' as the subject of a picture, and never discover that what constitutes its merit cannot be painted. The ballad expresses the charm which the water in summer has for us when it tempts us to bathe; that is all, — and how can that be painted?"

I mentioned how pleased I was to see how various were the interests called into action by his journey; how he saw every thing; shape and situation of the mountains, their geology and mineralogy; earth, rivers, clouds, air, wind, and storm; then the cities, the history of their origin and growth, architecture, painting, theatre; police of cities, trades, economy, laying out of the streets, human race, manner of living, individual peculiarities; then again, politics, warlike adventures, and a hundred other things.

He answered, "But you find no word upon music, because that is not within my circle. Each traveller should know what he is fit to see, and what properly belongs to him, on his journey."

The Herr Canzler came in for a few moments, and then went to the ladies. When he had left us, Goethe

praised him, and said, "All these excellent men, with whom you are now placed in so pleasant a relation, make what I call a home, — a home to which one is always willing to return."

I said that "I already perceived the beneficial effects of my present situation; for I found myself able to set aside my ideal and theoretic tendencies, and make use of the present moment more and more."

"It would be pity," said Goethe, "if it were not so. Only persist in your present view, and hold fast by the present. Each situation — nay, each moment — is of infinite worth; for each represents a whole eternity."

After a short pause, I turned the conversation to the best mode of treating the subject he had proposed to me, that of Tiefurt. "This subject," said I, "is complex; and it will be difficult to give it proper form. It seems to me it would be best treated in prose."

"It is not in itself," replied Goethe, "an object of sufficient significance for that. The didactic, descriptive form, would be the one I should choose; but even that is not perfectly appropriate. Perhaps you would do well to write ten or twelve little poems, in rhyme, but in various measures and forms, such as the various sides and views demand, on which light must be thrown to do justice to the subject." This idea struck me favorably. "Why, indeed," continued he, "should you not at once use dramatic means, and perhaps write a conversation with the gardener? In this way you could easily bring out the various sides. A comprehensive, great whole, is so difficult, that he who attempts it, seldom brings any thing to bear."

Wednesday, 10th November.

Goethe has been quite unwell for a few days past; he has a very bad cold. His cough seems to be very painful; for he has constantly his hand at his side.

I passed half an hour with him this evening, after the theatre. He sat in an arm-chair, propped up by cushions, and seemed to speak with difficulty.

He gave me a poem intended for insertion in *Kunst und Alterthum*. I took the light, and sat down to read it, at a little distance from him.

This poem was singular in its character, and, though I did not fully understand it, very much affected me on the first reading. The Paria was its subject, to illustrate which, he had adopted the form of Trilogy. Its tone was that of another world, and the mode of representation such, that I found it very difficult to enter into it. Then I heard Goethe often cough or sigh, and could not forget that he was near me. I read the poem again and again, without being able to get completely engaged in it; but I found that it grew upon me with each new reading, and appeared to me more and more to indicate the highest grade of Art.

At last I spoke to Goethe, and he gave me much new light, both as to subject and treatment.

"Indeed," said he, "the treatment is peculiar, and one who was not in good earnest, could not hope to penetrate the true meaning. It seems to me like a Damascene blade hammered out of steel wire. I have borne this subject about with me for forty years; so that it has had time to get clear of every thing extraneous."

"No doubt," said I, "it will produce an effect on the public."

"Ah, the public!" sighed Goethe.

"Would it not be well," said I, "to add such an explanation as we do to pictures, when we make the meaning obvious by describing the circumstances which led to the catastrophe?"

"I think not," said he; "that is well for pictures, but, as a poem is already expressed in words, words of interpretation only annihilate its significancy."

I thought Goethe was here very happy in pointing out the rock on which those who try to interpret poems are often wrecked. Still it may be questioned whether it be not possible to avoid this rock, and affix some explanatory words without injuring the delicacy of its inner life.

When I went away, he asked me to take the poem with me, and read it again, and also the "Roses from the East" (*Östlichen Rosen*) of Rückert, a poet whom he highly valued, and from whom he seemed to expect much.

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Thursday, November 13th.

Some days ago, as I was walking one fine afternoon towards Erfurt, I was joined by an elderly man, whom I supposed, from his appearance, to be some respectable citizen. We had not been together long, before the conversation turned upon Goethe. On my asking whether he knew Goethe,—"Do I know him?" said he, with vivacity; "I was his valet almost twenty years!" I begged to hear something of Goethe's youth, and he gladly consented to gratify me.

"When I first lived with him," said he, "he was very active in his habits, thin and elegant in his person.

I could easily have carried him in my arms." I asked whether Goethe, in that early part of his life here, was disposed to gayety. "Certainly," replied he; "always gay with the gay, but never when they passed a certain limit; in that case he became grave. Always working and seeking; his mind always bent on art and science; that was the way with my master. The Duke often visited him at evening, and staid so late, conversing on literary topics, that I would get extremely tired, and long to have the Duke go away. Even then he had begun to be interested in Natural Philosophy and History. One time, he rang for me in the middle of the night. When I came up, I found he had rolled his iron trundle-bed to the window, and was lying there, looking out upon the heavens. 'Have you seen nothing remarkable in the heavens?' asked he; and, when I answered in the negative, bid me run and ask the same question of the watchman. He said he had not seen any thing remarkable. When I returned with this answer to my master, I found him in the same position in which I had left him, lying in his bed, and gazing upon the sky. 'Listen,' said he to me; 'this is an important moment; there is now an earthquake, or one is just going to take place;' then he made me sit down on the bed, and showed me by what signs he knew this."

I asked the good old man "what sort of weather it was."

"A cloudy night," he replied; "no air stirring; very still and sultry." I asked if he believed there was an earthquake merely on Goethe's word.

"Yes," said he, "I believed it, for I always found

things happened as he said they would. Next day, while he was relating his observations at Court, a lady whispered to her neighbor, 'What visions are these of Goethe's?' But the Duke, and all the men present, believed Goethe, and the correctness of his observations was confirmed, in a few weeks, by the news that a part of Messina was on that night ruined by an earthquake."

Friday, 14th November.

[Goethe sent for Eckermann this evening. He went, and found him very unwell. After some conversation of no interest to the general reader, they spoke of Schiller.]

"I have," said I, "a peculiar feeling towards Schiller. Some scenes of his great dramas I read with genuine love and admiration; but presently I meet with something which violates the truth of nature, and then I can go no further. I feel this even in reading 'Wallenstein.' I cannot but think that Schiller's turn for philosophy has injured his poetry, because this led him to prefer Ideas to Nature, indeed, almost to annihilate nature. What he could conceive must happen, whether it were in conformity with the law of nature or no."

"It was sorrowful," said Goethe, "to see how so highly gifted a man tormented himself with systems of philosophy which would no way profit him. Humboldt has shown me the letters which Schiller wrote to him in those unblest days of speculation. There we see how he plagued himself with the design of separating perfectly *naïve* from sentimental poetry. For such poetry

he could find no proper groundwork, and from the attempt arose unspeakable confusion. As if," continued he, smiling, "sentimental poetry could exist without the *naïve* ground in which it properly has its root.

"Schiller produced nothing instinctively or unconsciously; he must reflect upon every step; therefore he always wished to talk over his literary plans, and has conversed with me about all his later works, piece by piece, as he was writing them.

"On the other hand, it was contrary to my nature to talk over my poetic plans with any body; even with Schiller. I carried them about with me in silence, and usually said not a word to any one till the whole was completed. When I showed Schiller 'Hermann and Dorothea,' he was astonished because I had said not a syllable of any such plan.

"But I shall be anxious to hear what you will say of 'Wallenstein' to-morrow. You will see noble shapes, and the piece will probably make on you such an impression as you do not now dream of."

Saturday, 15th November.

In the evening, I for the first time saw "Wallenstein." Goethe had not said too much; the piece made on me an impression which reached the very depths of my nature. The actors, who had almost all been under the personal influence of Schiller and Goethe, gave to the personages an individuality, and to the whole a significance, far beyond what I had found in reading it. I could not get it out of my head the whole night.

Sunday, 16th November.

I went to see Goethe; found him in his elbow-chair, and still very weak. His first question was about "Wallenstein;" and he heard my account of the impression it had made upon me with visible satisfaction.

Herr Soret came in and brought from the Duke some gold medals. Looking at these and talking them over entertained Goethe very pleasantly for an hour. Then Herr Soret attended Frau von Goethe to Court, and I was left alone with Goethe.

I reminded him of his promise to show me again his Marienbad Elegy. He brought it, gave me a light, seated himself again, and left me to an undisturbed perusal of the piece.

After I had been reading awhile, I turned to say something to him, but he seemed to be asleep. I therefore used the favorable moment, and read the poem again and again with a rare delight. The youthful glow of love, tempered by the moral elevation of the spirit, seemed its pervading characteristic. Then I thought that emotion was more forcibly expressed than in Goethe's other poems, and imputed this to the influence of Byron — an opinion which Goethe did not reject.

"You see the product of a highly impassioned mood," said he. "While I was in it, I would not for the world be without it, and now nothing would tempt me to be in it again.

"I wrote that poem immediately after leaving Marienbad, while the feeling of all I had experienced there was fresh. At eight in the morning, when we

stopped first, I wrote down the first stanza; and so I went on composing them in the carriage, and writing them down when we stopped, so that by evening the whole was on paper. Thence it has a certain directness, and being all, as I may say, poured out at once, may have a better air as a whole."

"It has," said I, "a quite peculiar aspect, and recalls no other poem of yours."

"That," said he, "may be because I looked at the present moment as a man does upon a card on which he has staked a considerable sum, and sought to enhance its value as much as I could without exaggeration." These words struck me much; they threw light on his conduct, and seemed to give a clew to the understanding of that many-sidedness which has excited so much wonder.

Stadelmann now came to apply to his side a plaster which the physician had prescribed. I turned to the window, but heard him lamenting to Stadelmann, that his illness was not lessening, but seemed to have assumed a character of permanence. When it was over, I sat down by him again. He observed that he had not slept for some nights, and had no appetite. "The winter," said he, "will go, and I can do nothing, bring nothing to bear; my mind has no force." I tried to soothe him, and represented, that, if he would not think too much of his plans at present, there was reason to hope he would soon be better. "Ah," said he, "I am not impatient; I have lived through too many such situations, not to have learned to endure and to wait."

I now rose to bid him good night. He was in his

flannel gown, and said he should sit in his chair all night, for he should not sleep if he went to bed. I pressed his dear hand, and took leave.

Down stairs I found Stadelmann much agitated. He said he was much alarmed about his master, for "if *he* complains, that is a bad sign indeed! And his feet look thin, which have been a little swollen till lately! I shall go to the physician early in the morning, and tell him these bad signs." I could not succeed in calming his fears.

Monday, 17th November.

When I entered the theatre this evening, many persons pressed towards me, asking anxiously, "How is Goethe?" I think his illness has been exaggerated in the town, but I felt depressed all the evening.

Wednesday, 19th.

Yesterday, I was very anxious; for no one out of his family was admitted to see him.

But this evening he received me. He did not seem better in health than on Sunday, yet cheerful.

He talked of Zauper, and the widely differing results which are seen to proceed from the study of ancient literature.

Friday, 21st.

Goethe sent for me. To my great joy, I found him able to walk up and down in his chamber. He gave me a little book, "Gazelles," by Count Platen. "I had intended," said he, "to write a notice of this for *Kunst und Alterthum*, for the poems deserve it

But, as my present state will not permit me, try what you can do, after reading it."

I promised to try.

"'Gazelles,'" continued he, "have this peculiarity, that they demand great fulness of meaning. The constantly recurring similar rhymes must find a suitable provision of similar thoughts ready to meet them. Therefore, not every one succeeds in them; but I think they will please you."

Monday, 24th.

Saturday and Sunday, I studied the poems; this morning, I wrote down my view of them, and sent it to Goethe; for I had heard that the physician wished he should see nobody, and had forbidden him to talk.

However, he sent for me this evening. I found a chair placed for me near him; he gave me his hand, and seemed very affectionate and kind. He began immediately to speak of my little critique. "I was much pleased with it," said he; "you have a fair gift, and I wish now to say to you, that, if proposals for the employment of your talents should be made to you from other quarters, I hope you will refuse them, or at least consult me before deciding upon them; for, since you are now so linked with me, I would not willingly see you enter on other new relations."

I replied that I wished to belong to him alone, and had at present no reason to think of new connections.

We then talked of the "Gazelles." Goethe expressed his delight at the completeness of these poems, and that our present literature produced so much good fruit as it does.

"I wish," said he, "to recommend rising talent to your observation. I wish you to examine whatever our literature brings forth worthy of note, and to place before me whatever is most meritorious, that I may take due notice of what is good, noble, and well executed, in *Kunst und Alterthum*. For, if I am ever so desirous, I cannot, at my age, and with my manifold duties, do this without aid from other minds."

I said I would do as he desired, and was very glad to find that our late writers and poets were more interesting to him than I had supposed.

He sent me the latest literary periodicals to assist in the proposed task. I was not sent for, nor did I go to him, for several days, as I heard his friend Zelter had come to make him a visit.

Monday, 1st December.

To-day, I was invited to dine with Goethe. I found Zelter with him. Both came to meet me, and gave me their hands. "Here," said Goethe, "we have my friend Zelter. In him you make a valuable acquaintance. If I should send you soon to Berlin, you will see what excellent care he will take of you." "Is Berlin a good place?" said I. "Yes," replied Zelter, with a smile, "for there much may be learned, and much unlearned." We sat down and talked on various subjects. I asked after Schubarth. "He visits me at the least every eight days," said Zelter. "He is married now, but has no appointment, because of what has passed between him and the philologists in Berlin."

Zelter asked if I knew Immermann. I said I had often heard his name, but was not yet acquainted with

his writings. "I made his acquaintance at Münster," said Zelter; "he is a very hopeful young man, and it is a pity that his appointment leaves him so little time for his art." Goethe also praised his talent. "But we must see," said he, "how he comes out; whether he purifies his taste, and regulates his standard, according to the best models. His original strivings had their merit, but might easily be turned into a wrong direction."

Little Walter now came jumping in, asking a thousand questions, both of Zelter and his grandfather. "When thou comest, uneasy spirit," said Goethe, "all good conversation is spoiled." However, he loves the boy, and was unwearied in satisfying his wishes.

Frau von Goethe, and her sister, Fraulein Ulrica, now came in, and with them, young Goethe, in his uniform and sword, ready for Court. We sat down to table. Fraulein Ulrica and Zelter were very gay, and exchanged many a pleasant jest during dinner. I was much pleased with Zelter's appearance and manner. As a healthy, happy man, he could give himself up wholly to the influence of the moment, and always had the word fit for the occasion. Then he is very lively and kindly, and is so perfectly unconstrained, that he speaks out whatever is in his mind, and many a blunt substantial saying with the rest. He imparts to others his own freedom of spirit, and all narrowing views are set aside by his presence. I silently thought how much I should like to live with him awhile. I am sure it would do me good. Zelter went away soon after dinner, for he was invited to visit the Grand Duchess that evening.

Thursday, 4th December.

This morning, Secretary Kräuter brought me an invitation to dine with Goethe, at the same time intimating to me, by Goethe's desire, that I had better present Zelter with a copy of my book. I carried the copy to him at his hotel. He, on his side, offered me Immermann's poems. "I would give you this copy," said he, "but, as you see, the author has dedicated it to me, and I must therefore keep and value it."

Then, before dinner, I walked with Zelter through the park towards Upper Weimar. Many spots recalled to him anecdotes of former days, and he told me much of Schiller, Wieland, and Herder, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy, and considered this as one of the most valuable circumstances of his life.

He talked much of composition, and recited many of Goethe's songs. "If I am to compose for a poem," said he, "I try to get a clear understanding of all the words, and to bring the situation before me in the colors of life. I then read it aloud till I know it by heart, and afterwards, while I am reciting it, comes the melody of its own accord."

Wind and rain obliged us to return sooner than we wished. I accompanied him to Goethe's house, where he was going to sing before dinner with Frau von Goethe, left him there, and went home.

About two, I went there, and found Goethe and Zelter engaged in looking at engravings of Italian scenery. Frau von Goethe came in, and we sat down to dinner. Young Goethe and Fraulein Ulrica were out to-day.

At table, both Goethe and Zelter entertained us

with many original anecdotes illustrative of the peculiarities of their common friend, Wolf of Berlin. Then they talked of the *Nibelungen*, and of Lord Byron, and the visit it was hoped he will make at Weimar, in which Frau von Goethe takes the greatest interest. The Rochus feast at Bingen was also a subject, at which Zelter had been much charmed by two maidens, whose loveliness he greatly extolled. Goethe's song, *Kriegsgluck*, ("Fortune of War,") was gayly talked over. Zelter was inexhaustible in anecdotes of wounded soldiers and fair women, in proof of the truth of this poem. Goethe said he had not far to go for his facts; he had seen the whole in Weimar. Frau von Goethe amused herself by opposing them, and maintaining that women were not at all such as that naughty poem represented them.

The hours passed very pleasantly in such chat.

When I was left alone with Goethe, he asked me how I liked Zelter. I remarked that his influence was very genial. "He may," said Goethe, "on first acquaintance, seem blunt or even rough; but that is all in externals. I know scarce any one, who is, in reality, so delicate and tender. And then we must not forget that he has lived fifty years in Berlin. And the state of society there is such, that delicacy will not much avail you; and a man is forced to be vehement, and even rough, if he would keep his head above water."

Tuesday, 27th January, 1824.

Goethe talked with me about the continuation of his memoirs, with which he is now busy. He observed, that this later period of his life would not be narrated

with such minuteness as he had used in the *Dichtung und Wahrheit.*[1] "I must," said he, "treat this later period more in the fashion of annals, and content myself with detailing my outward actions, rather than depicting my inward life. Truly, the most important part of a man's life is that of development, and mine is contained in the minute disclosures of the *Dichtung und Wahrheit.* Later begins the conflict with the world, and that is interesting only in its results.

"And then the life of a literary man here in Germany, — what is it? What was really good in mine cannot be communicated, and what can be communicated is not worth the trouble. And where are the hearers whom one could entertain with any satisfaction? When I look around, and see how few of the companions of earlier years are left to me, I think of a summer residence at a bathing-place. When you arrive, you first become acquainted with those who have already been there some weeks, and who leave you in a few days. This separation is painful. Then you turn to the second generation, with which you live a good while, and become really intimate. But this goes also, and leaves us lonely with the third, which comes just as we are going away, and with which we have, properly, nothing to do.

"I have ever been esteemed one of Fortune's chiefest favorites; nor can I complain of the course my life has taken. Yet, truly, there has been nothing but toil and care; and, in my seventy-fifth year, I may say, that I have never had four weeks of genuine

[1] Poetry and Truth out of my Life.

pleasure. The stone was ever to be rolled up anew. My annals will testify to the truth of what I now say. The claims upon my activity, from within and without, were too numerous.

"What really made me happy was my poetic mind and creative power. And how was this disturbed, limited, and hindered, by the external circumstances of my condition! Had I been able to abstain from mingling in public business, I should have been happier, and, as a poet, should have accomplished much more. But, as it was, my *Goetz* and *Werther* verified for me that saying of the sage, 'If you do any thing for the advantage of the world, it will take good care that you shall not do it a second time.'

"A wide-spread celebrity, an elevated position in the world, are good things. But, for all my rank and celebrity, I am still obliged to be silent, lest I come into collision with the opinions of others.[1] This would be but poor sport, if I did not by this means learn the thoughts of others without their being able to scrutinize mine."

Sunday, 15th February.

This morning, I found Goethe in excellent spirits. He was much pleased with a visit he had just received from a young Westphalian, named Meyer. "He has," said he, "written poems of great promise. For the age of eighteen, he has made incredible progress. I

[1] [The word *verletzen* may mean "to injure the feelings, hurt the character." I am not sure that I take the truest sense. — TRANSL.]

am rejoiced," continued he, smiling, "that I am not eighteen just now. When I was eighteen, Germany was no older, and something could be done; but now-a-days, so much is demanded, that every avenue seems barred.

"Germany has become so distinguished in every department, that we can scarce find time to become acquainted with what she has done; and yet we must be Greeks and Romans, French and English, beside. Not content with this, some must needs explore the East also; and is not such a state of things enough to confuse a young man's head?

"I have shown him my colossal Juno, as a token that he had best seek repose among the Greeks. He is a fine young man, and, if he does not dissipate his energies on too many objects, will be sure to do well. However, as I said before, I thank Heaven that I am not young in this time and place. I could not stay here. And I fear I should find too broad daylight in America even, if I should take refuge there."

Sunday, 22d February.

Dined with Goethe and his son. The latter related some pleasant stories of the time when he was a student at Heidelberg.

After dinner, Goethe showed us some colored drawings of scenery in Northern Italy. We looked most at one representing the *Lago Maggiore*, with the Swiss mountains. The Borromean Isles were reflected in the water; near the shore were skiffs and fishing-tackle, which led Goethe to remark that this is the lake celebrated in the *Wanderjahre*. On the north-

west, towards Monte Rosa, stood the hills which border the lake in black-blue heavy masses, as we are wont to see them soon after sunset.

I remarked that, to me, who had been born in the plain country, the gloomy sublimity of these masses only gave uneasiness; that I could not feel at home with them, nor did I desire to explore their wild recesses.

"That is natural," said Goethe. "Man can conform perfectly to that situation only, in which, and for which, he was born. He who is not led abroad by a great object is far happier at home. I was at first disturbed and confused by the impression which Switzerland produced on me. Only after repeated visits — only in after years, when I visited those mountains as a mineralogist merely — could I converse with them at my ease."

We looked, afterwards, at many engravings, from pictures by modern French artists. These were so poor and weak in design, that, among forty, we barely found four or five good ones. These were a maiden with a love-letter; a woman in a house to let, which nobody will take; "catching fish;" and musicians before an image of the Madonna. A landscape, in imitation of Poussin, was tolerable; upon looking at which, Goethe said, "Such artists get a general idea of Poussin's landscapes, and work upon that. We can neither style their pictures good nor bad: they are not bad, because, through every part, you catch glimpses of their excellent model. But you cannot call them good, because they wholly want what was most individual in Poussin. 'Tis just so among poets. Look,

for instance, at those who would imitate Shakspeare's grand style."

Tuesday, 24th February.

I went to Goethe at one. He showed me a supplement he had written to my criticism on the "Paria."

"You were quite right," said he, "to try to become acquainted with India, on account of your little critical essay, since, in the end, we retain from our studies only that part which we can practically apply."

I answered that I had found it so in all the instruction I had ever received. I had retained what any natural tendency would lead me to apply, and forgotten all the rest. "I have," said I, "heard Heeren's lectures on ancient and modern history, and know now nothing about the matter. But, if I study a period of history for the sake of writing a drama, what I learn in that way abides with me."

"Every where," said Goethe, "they teach in academies too many things, and many useless things. In former days, the physician learned chemistry and botany, to aid him in his profession, and they were in such a state that he could manage them. Now, each of these departments has become so extensive, that any competent acquaintance with it is the work of a life; yet acquaintance with both is expected from the physician. That cannot be; one must be renounced or neglected for the sake of the other. He who is wise will put aside all claims which may dissipate his attention, and determine to excel in some one branch."

He then, after showing me a short criticism he had been writing upon Lord Byron's "Cain," added,

"We see how the inadequate dogmas of the church work upon a free mind like Byron's, and how throughout such a piece he struggles to get rid of the doctrine which has been forced upon him. The English clergy will not thank him; but I shall be surprised if he does not take up biblical subjects of similar import, and, among others, that of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah."

He then showed me a carved gem, of which he had expressed his admiration some days before. I was enchanted by the *naïveté* of the design. It represented a man who has taken a heavy vessel from his shoulder to give a boy drink. But the boy finds it is not bent down sufficiently; the drink will not flow; he has hold of the vessel with both hands, and is looking up into the man's face with an expression which seems to ask that he will lean it a little more towards him.

"Now! how do you like that?" said Goethe. "We moderns," continued he, "can indeed feel the beauty of such a perfectly natural, perfectly *naïve* design, but we cannot make such; the understanding is always uppermost, and will not permit that unconscious and enchanting grace."

We looked then at a medal by Brandt of Berlin, representing young Theseus taking the arms of his father from under the stone. The attitude had merit, but we found the limbs not sufficiently strained to lift such a burden. It seemed, too, a mistake for the youth to have one hand on the arms, while with the

other he lifts the stone; for, according to the nature of the thing, he should first roll aside the heavy stone, and then take the arms. "I will show you," said Goethe, "an antique gem, and let you see how the same subject is treated there."

He bid Stadelmann bring a box which contained several hundred copies of antique gems, which he had collected while in Italy. The Greek, indeed, had treated this subject differently. On the antique gem, I found the youth exerting his whole strength to move the stone, and not in vain; the stone is on the point of falling aside. All his bodily powers are directed by the young hero to the removal of this obstacle only; his looks are fixed on the arms which lie beneath.

We rejoiced in the truth and nature of this representation.

"Meyer," continued Goethe, laughing, "used to say, 'If only the thought were not so hard.' And the worst is, that no thinking will bring us such thoughts; we must be made right by nature, and let these fine thoughts come before us like free children of God, and cry, 'Here we are.'"

Wednesday, 25th February.

To-day, Goethe showed me two very remarkable poems, both highly moral in their tendency, but in action so natural and true, so perfectly unreserved, that the world would style them immoral; and he, therefore, does not publish them.

"Could intellect and high cultivation," said he, "indeed become the property of all, the poet would have fair play; he would be true to himself throughout,

and would not fear to tell his best thoughts. But, as it is, he must always keep on a certain level; must remember that his works will be read by a mixed society; and must take care not to do any thing which by over-great openness may annoy the majority of good men. Then, Time is a tyrant, who has strange whims, and turns a new face to each new century. We cannot, with propriety, say things which were very proper for the ancient Greeks; and the Englishman of 1820 cannot endure what suited the vigorous contemporaries of Shakspeare; so that the present day finds it necessary to have a family Shakspeare."

"Then," said I, "there is much in the form also. One of these two poems, which is composed in the style and metre of the ancients, would be far less offensive than the other. Certainly, parts must displease, but the whole has a tone of grandeur and dignity; so that we seem to hear a strong man of antiquity, and to be carried back to the heroic age of Greece. But the other, being in the style and metre of Messer Ariosto, has a much more suspicious air. It relates an event of our day, and in the language of our day; it wears no sort of veil, and its boldness seems bold indeed."

"You are right," said he; "the mysterious influence of different poetic forms is very great. If the import of my Romish elegies were put into the measure and style of Byron's 'Don Juan,' it would scarcely be endured."

The French newspapers were brought. Goethe was much interested by the campaign of the French in Spain under the Duke D'Angoulême. "The Bour-

bons," said he, "deserve praise for this measure; they were not firmly seated on the throne till they had won the army, and that is now accomplished. The soldier returns more loyal; for he has, from his own victory, and the discomfiture of the many-headed Spanish host, learned how much better it is to obey one than many. The army has sustained its former fame, and shown that it is brave in itself, and can fight without Napoleon."

Goethe then turned his thoughts backward into history, and talked of the seven years' war, and the Prussian army, which, accustomed by Frederic the Great to constant victory, grew careless, and thus, in after days, lost many battles. All the minutest details were familiar to him, and I had reason to admire his memory.

"I had the great advantage," said he, "of being born at a time when the world was agitated by great movements, which have continued during my long life; so that I am a living witness of the seven years' war, the separation of America from England, the French Revolution, and the whole Napoleon era, with the downfall of that hero, and the events which followed. Thus I have attained results and insight impossible to those who must learn all these things from books.

"What these coming years will bring I cannot predict; but I fear we cannot expect repose. The world is not so framed that it can keep quiet; the great are not so that they will not permit misuse of power; the masses not so that, in hope of a gradual amelioration, they will keep tranquil in an inferior condition. Could we perfect human nature,

we might expect perfection every where; but, as it is, there will always be this wavering hither and thither; one part must suffer while the other is at ease. Envy and egotism will be always at work like bad demons, and party conflicts find no end.

"The most reasonable way is to follow one's own vocation — do what you were born or have learned to do, and avoid hindering others from doing the same. Let the shoemaker abide by his last, the peasant by his plough, and the king by his sceptre. For the art of governing also requires an apprenticeship, and no one should meddle with it before having learned it."

Then, returning to the French papers,—"The Liberals," said he, "may speak, and, when they are reasonable, we like to hear them; but the Royalists, who have the power in their hands, should not talk, but act. They may march troops, and head and hang; that is all right;—but to argue in public prints, and try to prove that their measures are right, is not their proper way. They might talk, if they could address a public of kings.

"For myself, I have always been a Royalist. I have let others babble, and have done as I saw fit. I understood my course, and knew what my own object was. If you hurt one, you can make it up to him; but, if two or three, you had best let it alone: among many men there are so many minds."

Goethe was very gay to-day. He had just written in the album of Frau von Spiegel, and rejoiced in having fulfilled a promise of long standing. Turning over the leaves of this album, in which I found many distinguished names, I saw a poem by Tiedge, written

in the very spirit and style of his "Urania." "In a saucy mood," said Goethe, "I was tempted to write some verses beneath those; but I am glad I did not. It would not have been the first time that, by indulging myself in rash liberties, I had repelled good people, and spoiled the effect of my best works.

"However, I have endured not a little from Tiedge; for, at one time, nothing was sung or declaimed but this same 'Urania.' Wherever you went, there lay 'Urania' on the table. 'Urania' and immortality were the topics of every conversation. I could in no wise dispense with the happiness of believing in our future existence, and, indeed, could say, with Lorenzo de Medici, that those are dead for this life even, who have no hope for another. But such incomprehensible subjects lie too far off, and only disturb our thoughts if made the theme of daily meditation. Let him who believes in immortality enjoy his happiness in silence, without giving himself airs thereupon. The occasion of 'Urania' led me to observe that piety has its pretensions to aristocracy, no less than noble blood. I met stupid women, who plumed themselves on believing, with Tiedge, in immortality, and I was forced to bear much catechising on this point. They were vexed by my saying I should be well pleased to be ushered into a future state after the close of this, only I hoped I should *there* meet none of those who had believed in it here. For, how should I be tormented! The pious would throng around me, and say, 'Were we not right? Did we not foresee it? Has not it happened just as we said?' And so there would be ennui without end.

"All this fuss about such points is for people of rank, and especially women, who have nothing to do. But an able man, who has something to do here, and must toil and strive day by day to accomplish it, leaves the future world till it comes, and contents himself with being active and useful in this. Thoughts about immortality are also good for those who have small success here below, and I would wager that better fortune would have brought our good Tiedge better thoughts."

Thursday, 26th February.

I dined with Goethe. After the cloth had been removed, he bade Stadelmann bring in some large portfolios of engravings. Goethe detected some dust on the covers, and, not finding any cloths at hand to wipe it away, he was much displeased, and scolded Stadelmann. "I speak for the last time," said he; "if these cloths, for which I have asked so often, are not forthcoming to-day, I declare that I will go myself to buy them to-morrow, and you shall see that I will keep my word." Stadelmann went for them immediately.

"I used the same means with Becker, the actor," added Goethe to me, in a lively tone, "when he refused to take the part of a trooper in 'Wallenstein.' I gave him warning that, if he would not take the part, I myself would appear in it. That did the business. For they knew me at the theatre well enough to be sure that I was not in jest, and would keep my word in any case."

"And would you really have appeared on the boards?" asked I.

"Yes," said Goethe, "I would have taken the part, and would have eclipsed Mr. Becker, too, for I understood the matter better than he did."

We then looked at the drawings and engravings. Goethe takes great interest in forming my taste; he shows me only what is complete, and endeavors to make me apprehend the intention of the artist; he would have me think and feel only with the thoughts and feelings of the noblest beings. "This," said he, "is the way to cultivate what we call taste. Taste should be educated by contemplation, not of the tolerably good, but of the truly excellent. I show you the best, and when you have thoroughly apprehended these, you will have a standard, and will know how to value inferior performances, without overrating them. And I show you the best in each sort, that you may perceive no department is to be despised, since each may be elevated, by genius working in it, to a source of improvement and delight. For instance, this piece, by a French artist, has a gentility which you see no where else, and is admirable in its way."

He then showed me some etchings by Roos, the famous painter of animals; they were all of sheep in different postures and situations. The simplicity of their countenances, their fleece, all about them, was represented with wonderful fidelity; it was nature itself. "I am half frightened," said Goethe, "when I look at these beasts. Their state, so limited, dull, gaping, and dreaming, excites in me such sympathy, that I feel as if I might become a sheep, and as if the artist must have been one. How could he enter so into the inmost character of these creatures? for their

very soul looks through the bodies he has drawn. Here you see what great talent can do when it keeps steady to subjects which are congenial with its nature."

"Has not, then," said I, "this artist painted dogs, cats, and beasts of prey with equal truth, or indeed has he not, by his gift of sympathy, been able to represent human nature also?"

"No," said Goethe, "all that lay out of his circle; but the gentle, grass-eating animals, sheep, cows, and the like, he was never weary of repeating; this was the peculiar province of his talent, in which he was content to work. And in this he did well. His sympathy with these animals, his knowledge of their psychology, were born with him, and this gave him so fine an eye for their bodily structure. The nature of other creatures was not so transparent to him, and therefore he felt no desire to paint them."

The remembrance of many analogies awoke within me at these words. So had Goethe said to me, not long since, that knowledge of the world is inborn with the genuine poet, who, therefore, needs not much experience or varied observation to represent it adequately. "I wrote *Goetz von Berlichingen*," said he, "at two and twenty, and was astonished, ten years after, to observe the fidelity of my own representation. It is obvious that I could have seen and experienced but a small part of that various picture of life, and could only know how to paint it by presentiment.

"I felt unalloyed pleasure in painting my inward world before I became acquainted with the outward. But when I found that the world was really just what I had fancied, I was chagrined, and my pictures gave

me no more pleasure. Indeed, having represented the world so clearly before I knew it, when I did know it, my representation might well take a tinge of persiflage." "There is in every character," said he, another time, "a certain necessity, a sequence, which obliges secondary features to be formed from leading features. Observation teaches you how to draw your inferences when once you have ascertained certain premises; but some persons possess this knowledge untaught. Whether with me experience and this innate faculty are united, I will not say; but this I know, if I have talked with any man a quarter of an hour, I can make him talk two hours."

Goethe had said of Lord Byron, that the world to him was transparent, and that he could paint by the light of his presentiments; I doubted whether Byron would succeed in painting, for instance, a subordinate animal nature, for his individuality seemed to me to be so dear to him, that he could not give himself up to such a subject. Goethe agreed, and said that even genius had not instinctive knowledge on subjects uncongenial with its nature.

"And if your excellency," said I, "maintain that the world is inborn with the poet, you mean only the world of soul, as it manifests itself in human relations, and not the empiric world of shows and conventions; the latter, surely, even the poet must learn from observation."

"Certainly," replied Goethe; "the poet knows by instinct how to represent the region of love, hate, hope, despair, or by whatever other names you may call the moods and passions of the soul. But he knows not by

instinct how courts are held, or how a coronation is managed, and, if he meddle with such subjects, must depend either on experience or tradition. Thus, in 'Faust,' I might by presentiment have known how to describe my hero's weariness of life, and the emotions which love excites in the heart of Margaret; but the lines,

Wie traurig steigt die unvollkommne Scheibe
Des spāten Monds mit feuchter Glut heran!

'How gloomily does the imperfect orb
Of the late moon arise in humid glow!'

require that the writer should have observed nature."

"Yet," said I, "every line of 'Faust' bears marks, not to be mistaken, of most careful study of life and the world. The reader would suppose it the fruit of the amplest experience."

"Perhaps so," replied Goethe; "yet, had I not the world in my soul from the beginning, I must ever have remained blind with my seeing eyes, and all experience and observation would have been dead and unproductive. The light is there, and the colors surround us; but, if we bore nothing corresponding in our own eyes, the outward apparition would not avail us."

Saturday, 28th February.

"There are," said Goethe, "excellent men, who cannot endure to do any thing impromptu, or superficially, but whose nature demands that they should fix their attention in leisurely tranquillity on any object for which they are to do any thing. Such minds often

make us impatient, for we can seldom get from them what we want for the moment; but in their way the noblest tasks are accomplished."

I spoke of Ramberg. "He," said Goethe, "is by no means a man of such a stamp, but of most genial talents, and unequalled in his power of impromptu effort. At Dresden, one day, he asked me to give him a subject. I gave him Agamemnon, at the moment when, on his return from Troy, he is descending from his chariot at his own gate, and is seized with a gloomy presentiment as he is about to touch the threshold. You will agree that such a subject would have demanded, in the eyes of most artists, mature deliberation. But the words had scarcely passed my lips, before Ramberg began to draw, and astonished me by his perfect apprehension of his aim."

We talked then of other artists, who had set to work in a very superficial way, and thus degenerated into mannerists.

"The mannerist," said Goethe, "is always longing to get through, and has no true enjoyment of his work. But genius is happy in finishing out the details necessary to express its idea. Roos is unwearied in drawing the hair and wool of his goats and sheep, and you see by his nicety in details that he was truly happy in his work, and had no wish to bring it to an end.

"People of little minds are not happy in art for its own sake; while at work they always have before their eyes what they shall get by what they are doing. Such worldly views and tendencies never yet produced any thing great."

Sunday, 29th February.

I breakfasted with Goethe. I endeavored to persuade him that his "Gods, Heroes, and Wieland," as well as his "Letters of a Pastor," had better be inserted in the new edition of his works.

"I cannot," said Goethe, "at my present period, judge of the merit of those youthful productions. You younger people are the proper judges of them. Yet I am not inclined to find fault with those beginnings; indeed, I was then in the dark, and struggled on without knowing what it was I sought so earnestly; but I had a perception of the right, a divining-rod, that showed me where gold was to be found."

I observed that if this were not the case with strong intellects, they would lose much time in this mixed world.

The horses were now at the door, and we rode towards Jena. The conversation turned on the late news from France. "The constitution of France," said Goethe, "belonging to a people who have within themselves so many elements of corruption, rests upon a very different basis from that of England. Every thing and any thing may be done in France by bribery; indeed the whole course of the French revolution was directed by such means."

He then spoke of the death of Eugene Napoleon, (Duke of Leuchtenberg,) which seemed to grieve him much. "He was one of those great characters," said Goethe, "which are becoming more and more rare; and the world is the poorer for his loss. I knew him personally; we were at Marienbad together last summer. He was a handsome man, about forty-two; he looked

much older, as you might expect, when you called to mind all he has gone through, and how all his life was crowded with campaigns and great deeds. He talked with me at Marienbad of a plan which he was bent on executing, the union of the Rhine with the Danube, by means of a canal — a stupendous enterprise, when you consider the obstacles offered by the locality. But a man who had served under Napoleon, and with him shaken the world, finds impossibilities nowhere. The Emperor Charles had the same plan, and even began the work, but soon came to a still stand. They could do nothing because of the sand; the banks were always falling together again after the course had been dug out."

Monday, 22d March.

This morning I went with Goethe into his garden.

The situation of this garden, on the farther side of the Ilm, near the park, and on the western declivity of a hill, gives it a very inviting aspect. It is protected from the north and east winds, but open to the cheering influences of the south and west, which makes it delightful, especially in spring and autumn.

Towards the north-west lies the town. It is in fact so near, that you can be there in a few minutes, and yet you see not the top of a building, or even a spire, which could remind you of the neighborhood of men; the tall and thickly-planted trees of the park shut out every other object on that side.

Towards the west and south-west you have a free lookout over the wide meadows, through which, at about the distance of a bow-shot, the Ilm winds silently.

The opposite bank swells into a hill, whose summit and sides are clothed with the ash-trees, alders, poplars, and birches of the far-extended park, and give a beautiful limit to the view on the southern and western sides.

This view of the park over the meadows gives a feeling, especially in summer, as if you were near a wood which extended leagues round about. You look to see deer bounding out upon the meadows. You enjoy the peace of the deepest natural solitude, for the silence is often uninterrupted, except by the notes of some lonely blackbird, or the song of the wood-thrush.

Out of this dream of profound solitude we were now awakened by the striking of the tower clock. the screaming of the peacocks from the park, and the drums and horns of the military in the barracks. And it was not unpleasant to be thus reminded of the neighborhood of the friendly city, from which we seemed distant so many miles.

At certain seasons, these meadows are far enough from being lonely. You see sometimes country people going to, or returning from, the Weimar market; sometimes people walking along the windings of the Ilm towards Upper Weimar, which is much visited at times. Haying-time also animates the scene very agreeably. In the back-ground, you see flocks of sheep, and sometimes the stately Swiss cow, feeding.

To-day, however, there were none of those summer sights and sounds which are so refreshing to the mind. Only on the meadows were visible some streaks of green; the trees as yet could boast nothing but brown twigs and buds; yet the stroke of the finch, with

occasional notes from the blackbird and thrush, announced the approach of spring.

The air was pleasant and summerlike; a mild south-west wind was blowing. Certain appearances in the heavens drew Goethe's thoughts to the barometer; he spoke of its rise and fall, which he called the affirmative and negative of water. He spoke of the eternal laws which regulate the inhaling and exhaling processes throughout the earth; of a possible deluge; that, though each place has its proper atmosphere, there is great uniformity in the state of the barometer throughout Europe; that nature is incommensurable, and her laws often detected with great difficulty.

While he instructed me on such high subjects, we were walking up and down the broad gravel-walk. We came near the garden-house, and he bid the servant unlock it, that he might show me the interior. Without, the whitewashed walls were covered with rose-bushes, trained over it on espaliers. I saw, with pleasure, on these rose-bushes many birds' nests, which had been there since the preceding summer, and, now that the bushes were bare of leaves, were exposed to the eye. There were many nests of the linnet and hedge-sparrow, built high or low, according to the different habits of those birds.

In the lower story, I found only one room. The walls were hung with some charts and engravings, and with a portrait of Goethe, as large as life, taken by Meyer just after the return of both friends from Italy. Goethe here appears in the prime of his powers and his manhood, brown, and rather stout. His

expression is composed and earnest, — that of a man on whose mind lies the weight of great designs.

Up stairs, I found three rooms, and one little cabinet; but all very small, and not very convenient. Goethe said that, in earlier years, he had passed a great deal of his time, and worked here, in much tranquillity.

The rooms were rather cold, and we returned into the open air.

We talked a little on literary topics; but our attention was soon attracted by the natural objects in our path. The crown-imperials and lilies were sprouting, the mallows already green.

The upper part of the garden, on the declivity of the hills, is covered with grass, and here and there a few fruit-trees. Paths wind up to the summit, and then return to the foot. I wished to ascend. Goethe walked swiftly before me, and I was rejoiced to see how active he is.

On the hedge we saw a peahen, which seemed to have come from the park; and Goethe remarked that he had, in summer time, been wont to allure the peacocks into his garden, by giving them such food as they loved.

Descending on the other side of the hill, I found a stone, surrounded by shrubs, on which was carved this line from the well-known poem —

Hier im stillen gedachte der Liebende seiner Geliebten;

"Here in silence the lover thought of her he loved;"

and I felt as if I were on classic ground.

Near this was a thicket of half-grown oaks, firs, birches, and beech-trees. Beneath a fir, I found the feather of a bird of prey; and Goethe said he had often seen them in this place. I think it probable that owls resort to these firs.

Passing this thicket, we found ourselves once more on the principal path near the house. In this place, the trees are planted in a semicircle, and overarch a space, in which we sat down on benches, which are placed about a round table. The sun was so powerful, that the shade, even of these leafless trees, was agreeable. "I know," said Goethe, "no pleasanter place, in the heats of summer, than this. I planted the trees forty years ago, with my own hand; have had the pleasure of watching their growth; and have already enjoyed their refreshing shade for some years. The foliage of these oaks and beecnes is absolutely impervious to the sun. In hot summer days, I sit here after dinner; and often over the meadows and the park such stillness reigns, that the ancients would say, '*Pan sleeps.*'"

We now heard the tower-clock striking two, and returned to the house.

Tuesday, 30th March.

This evening, I was with Goethe. We talked of the French and German drama. Goethe spoke highly of Iffland and Kotzebue. "They have fine talents in their own way," said he, "and have been treated with such severity, only because men are not willing to criticise each production after its kind."

He spoke of Platen's new dramas. "Here," said

he, "you see the influence of Calderon. They are full of thought, and, in a certain sense, complete; but they want depth, want specific gravity. They will not excite in the mind of the reader a deep and abiding interest; the strings of the soul are touched but lightly and hastily. They are like cork, which makes no impression on the element which so readily sustains it.

"The German asks earnestness, a grandeur of thought, and fulness of sentiment; these are the qualities which have made Schiller so admired by our people. I doubt not the abilities of Platen; and, if he does not manifest the qualities I have mentioned, I think his failure proceeds from mistaken views of art. He shows distinguished culture, intellect, sparkling wit, and much adroitness as an artist; yet these, especially in Germany, are not all that the drama demands.

"Generally, the personal character of the writer influences the public, rather than his talents as an artist. Napoleon said of Corneille, 'If he were living now, I would make him a prince;' yet he never read him. Racine he read, but spoke not so of him. Lafontaine is looked upon with so high a degree of esteem among his countrymen, — not on the score of his poetic merits, but of the dignified character which he manifests in his writings."

We then talked of the "Elective Affinities," (*Wahlverwandtschaften.*) He spoke of divorces. "The late Reinhard of Dresden," said he, "wondered that I should be so severe on the subject of marriage,

while I entertain such free opinions on other subjects."

I treasured up this remark of Goethe's, because it showed so clearly what had been his own intention in that much misinterpreted romance. (*Die Wahlverwandtschaften.*)

The conversation turned upon Tieck, and his personal relation to Goethe.

"I entertain the greatest kindness for Tieck," said Goethe, "and I think he is well disposed towards me; yet is the relation between us not exactly what it should be. This is neither his fault nor mine, but occasioned by circumstances which I will tell you.

"When the Schlegels began to be of note in the world, they found me too important for their views, and looked about for some man of genius, whom they might set up in opposition to me, and thus maintain the balance of power. They pitched upon Tieck; and, wishing to make him a fit rival in the eyes of the public, they exaggerated his pretensions, and placed him in an awkward position with regard to me.

"Tieck is a man of great talents, and nobody can be more sensible than myself to his really extraordinary merit; only, when they tried to raise him above his proper place, and speak of him as my equal, they made a great mistake. I do not hesitate to speak of myself as I am; I did not make myself what I am. But I might, with as much propriety, compare myself with Shakspeare, who also is, as he was made, a being of a higher order than myself, to whom I must look up and pay due reverence."

Goethe was this evening full of energy and gayety. He read aloud some of his unpublished poems. I enjoyed hearing him exceedingly; for, not only did I feel the original beauty of the poems, but Goethe's manner of reading them opened to me new views. What variety and force in his voice! What life and expression in the noble countenance amid the wrinkles of so many years of thought! And what eyes!

Wednesday, 14th April, 1824.

I went to walk with Goethe about one. We discussed the styles of various writers.

"On the whole," said Goethe, "the turn for philosophical speculation is an injury to the Germans, as it tends to make style vague and obscure. The stronger their attachment to certain philosophical schools, the worse do they write. Those among us who deal chiefly with practical affairs write the best. Schiller's style is noble and impressive whenever he leaves off philosophizing. I observe this in his very interesting letters, with which I am now busy.

"There are women in Germany, of genial temperament, who write a really excellent style, and, indeed, in that respect, surpass many of our celebrated writers.

"Englishmen almost always write well; for they are born orators, and the practical tendency of their pursuits is very favorable to the formation of a good style.

"The French, in this respect also, remain true to their general character. They are born for society, and therefore never forget the public in writing or speaking; they strive to be clear, that they may

convince, — agreeable, that they may attract the reader.

"Indeed, the style of a writer is almost always the faithful representative of his mind; therefore, if any man wish to write a clear style, let him begin by making his thoughts clear; and if any would write in a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul."

Goethe then spoke of his antagonists, as a race which would never become extinct. "Their number," said he, "is Legion; yet they may be classified with some precision. First, there are my stupid antagonists, — those who find fault with me, because they do not understand me. This is a large company, who have wearied me extremely in the course of my life; yet shall they be forgiven, for they know not what they do.

"The second class is composed of those who envy and hate me, because I have attained, through my talents, fame, fortune, and a dignified station. Should I become poor and miserable, they would assail me no more.

"There are many who hate me because they have failed. In this class are men of fine powers, but who cannot forgive me, because I cast them into the shade.

"Fourthly, there are my antagonists who have good reasons. For, as I am a human being, with human faults and weaknesses, it is not to be expected that my writings should be free from them. Yet, as I was constantly bent on my own improvement, and always striving to ennoble myself, I have often, as I advanced in my culture, been blamed for faults

which I had long since left behind. These critics have injured me least of any, as their darts were aimed at a place from which I was already miles distant. When a work is finished, it becomes uninteresting to me; I think of it no more, but busy myself with some new plan.

"Another large class comprises those who differ from me in their views and modes of thought. It is said, that on the same tree you will scarce find two leaves perfectly alike. Just so you will, among a thousand men, scarce find two, who harmonize entirely in their views and ways of thinking. This being allowed, I find less cause to marvel at my having so many opponents, than at my having so many friends and adherents. My tendencies were wholly opposed to those of my time, which were subjective; so that my objective efforts left me in solitude, and kept me at disadvantage.

"Schiller had, in this respect, great advantage over me. Indeed, a certain well-meaning General once gave me to understand, that I ought to write like Schiller. I replied by analyzing Schiller's merits, which I understood better than he. And I went quietly on in my own way, not troubling myself about outward success, and taking as little notice as possible of my opponents."

We returned, and had a very pleasant time at dinner. Frau von Goethe talked much of Berlin, where she has lately been. She spoke with especial warmth of the Duchess of Cumberland, who had paid her many friendly attentions. Goethe remembered this

princess, who, when very young, had passed some time with his mother, with particular interest.

In the evening, I partook of a musical entertainment of a high order. At the house of Goethe, some fine singers performed parts of Handel's Messiah, under the superintendence of Eberwein. Also, the Gräfin Caroline von Egloffstein, Fraulein von Froriep, with Frau von Pogwisch and Frau von Goethe, joined the choir of female singers, and thus gratified a wish which Goethe had entertained long since.

Goethe, sitting at some distance, wholly absorbed in hearing, passed a happy evening in admiring a noble work.

Monday, 19th April.

The greatest philologist of our time, Friedrich August Wolf, from Berlin, is here, on his way towards the south of France. Goethe gave, to-day, on his account, a dinner-party of his Weimar friends. General Superintendent Röhr, Chancellor von Müller, Oberbau-Director Coudray, Professor Riemer, and Hofrath Rehbein, were the guests, beside Wolf and myself. The conversation was very pleasant. Wolf was full of witty sallies, — Goethe constantly opposing him, but in the pleasantest way. "I cannot," said Goethe to me afterwards, "converse with Wolf at all, without assuming the character of Mephistophiles. Besides, nothing less can induce him to display his hidden treasures."

The *bon mots* at table were of too evanescent a nature to bear repetition. Wolf was rich in witty

sayings and striking remarks; yet, to me, Goethe seemed always to maintain a certain superiority over him.

The hours flew by, and six o'clock came before we were aware. I went with young Goethe to the theatre, where the "Magic Flute" was given that night. Wolf came in the latter part of the evening, with the Grand Duke Karl August.

Wolf remained in Weimar till the 25th, when he set out for the south of France. His health was in such a state, that Goethe expressed the greatest anxiety about him.

Sunday, 2d May.

Goethe reproved me for not having visited a certain family of distinction. "You might," said he, "have passed there, during the winter, many delightful evenings, and made the acquaintance of many interesting strangers; all which you have lost from God knows what whim."

"My disposition," I replied, "is so excitable, my sympathies are so strong and ready, that too great a multiplicity of new impressions is burdensome and hurtful to me. I am neither by education nor habit fitted for general society. My situation in earlier days was such, that I feel as if I had never lived till I came near you. All is new to me. Every evening at the theatre, every conversation with you, makes an era in my existence. Things perfectly indifferent to those who are accustomed to them, make a deep impression on me. I seize on every thing with

energy, and draw from every thing nourishment. I have had all I desired this winter, from the theatre and your society; other connections and engagements would only have disturbed my mind."

"You are an odd Christian," said Goethe, laughing. "Well, do as you please; I will let you alone for the future."

"And then," continued I, "I carry always my feelings into society; I like or dislike; I feel the need of loving and being beloved; I seek a nature which may harmonize with my own; I wish to give myself up to such a one, and to have nothing to do with the others."

"This tendency of yours," replied Goethe, "is indeed likely to unfit you for society; for what would be the use of culture, if it did not teach us to modify and control our natural tendencies. 'Tis mere folly to hope that other men will harmonize with us; I have never been guided by such motives; I have regarded each man as an independent individual, whom I might study, and whose characteristics I might learn to understand, but from whom I must not expect further sympathy. Only in this way have I been enabled to converse with every man, to obtain the knowledge of various characters, and the dexterity necessary for the conduct of life. For it is by conflict with natures opposed to his own that a man learns to show himself a man. Thus only can the various sides of the character be brought out, till it attains a certain completeness, and the man feels sure of himself in opposition to any and every man. This is what you need. You can do so, if you please;

and, indeed, there is no evading the great world; you must find your place in it, whether you will or no."

I took due heed of these good words, and shall be guided by them as far as I can.

Towards evening, Goethe invited me to take a drive with him. Our road lay over hills through Upper Weimar, by which we had a view of the park towards the west. The trees were in blossom, the birches already in full leaf. The setting sun cast a broad glow over the wide green meadows. We busied ourselves with seeking out picturesque groups, and could not look enough. We remarked that these trees, full of white blossoms, are not adapted for pictures, as the leafy birches are unfit for the foreground of a picture; because the delicate leaf does not sufficiently contrast with the white trunk; — there were no masses large enough for fine effects of light and shade. "Ruysdael," said Goethe, "never introduced the birch with its foliage into his foregrounds, but only birch trunks broken off at top, without any leaves. Such a trunk is very effective in a foreground, its shape has such natural prominence."

After some slight discussion of other topics, we came upon the mistake of those artists who make religion the object of art, while art itself should be their religion. "Religion," said Goethe, "stands in the same relation to art as any other great interest of life. It is merely to be looked upon as affording material for the artist. Faith is not the faculty by which you are to comprehend a work of art; that is calculated to call into action wholly different faculties.

And art must address itself to those parts of our being which are intended for the appreciation of her achievements. A religious subject may be a good one for art, but only in so far as it possesses general human interest. The Virgin with the Child is an excellent subject, and one that we may see treated a hundred times, yet not be weary."

Returning homeward, we had the setting sun in full view. Goethe was lost awhile in thought. He then said to me, in the words of one of the ancients,

Untergehend sogar ist's immer dieselbige Sonne.

"Even while sinking it remains the same sun."

"At the age of seventy-five," continued he, with animation, "one must, of course, think frequently of death. But this thought never gives me the least uneasiness, — I am so fully convinced that the soul is indestructible, and that its activity will continue through eternity. It is like the sun, which seems to our earthly eyes to set in night, but is in reality gone to diffuse its light elsewhere."

While he said this, the sun had sunk behind the Ettersberge, and the chill of the evening warned us to hasten homeward. Goethe urged me to go in with him for a while, and I did so. He was in an extremely engaging, amiable mood. He talked of his *Farbenlehre*, and of his obstinate opponents; remarking that he was sure that he had done something for the cause of science.

"That a man should be able to make an epoch in the world's history," said he, "two conditions are

essential, — that he should have a good head, and a great inheritance. Napoleon inherited the French Revolution; Frederic the Great, the Silesian War; Luther, the errors of the Popes; and I, those of the Newtonian theory. My own time has no conception of what I have accomplished; but posterity will know."

We spoke of notes which I had found among his papers, written at the time when he was training Wolf and Grüner for the stage. I thought these might be so instructive to young actors, that I proposed to put them together, and make from them a sort of theatre catechism. Goethe consented.

We spoke of some distinguished actors, who had been formed in his school; and I asked some questions about Frau von Heigendorf. "I may," said Goethe, "have influenced her, but I cannot speak of her as my pupil. She seemed born for the stage, and was, in all she undertook, as decided, ready, and adroit, as a duck in the water. She needed not instruction, but did what was right instinctively and unconsciously."

We then talked of his superintendence of the theatre; and it was remarked how much time he had lavished there which might have been devoted to literature. "Yes," said he, "I have by this means missed, no doubt, writing many a good thing; yet do I not repent. I have always regarded all I have done solely as symbolical; and, at bottom, it does not signify whether I made pots or dishes."

Thursday, 6th May.

When I came to Weimar, last summer, I did not intend to remain, but, after having become acquainted

with Goethe, to visit the Rhine, and live there some time, if I could find a place which suited me.

I had been detained at Weimar by Goethe's kindness, and the various services I had been able to render him, but had never forgotten my original project; and Goethe himself, unwilling that I should carry within me the sting of an unsatisfied desire, advised me to devote some months of this summer to the fulfilment of my project.

It was, however, decidedly his wish, that I should return to Weimar. He observed that it was not well to break ties as soon as they have been made, and that nothing which has not sequence is of any value in life. And he intimated that he wished to join me with Riemer, not only to aid him in preparing a new and complete edition of his works, but to take charge of it in case he should be suddenly called away, as might naturally happen at his age.

He showed me immense packages of letters, laid out in what is called the Chamber of Busts, (*Büsten-Zimmer.*) "These," said he, "are letters which I have been receiving since 1780, from the most distinguished men of our country. There lies hoarded a rich treasure of thoughts, which it shall some time be your office to impart to the public. A chest is now making, in which I shall put these letters, with the rest of my literary legacies. I wish you, before you leave me, to put all these papers in order, that I may feel tranquil about them, and have a care the less."

He then told me that he should probably visit Marienbad again this summer, and disclosed to me, in confidence, his reasons. He wishes me to return

from my journey, if possible, before his departure; that he may have an opportunity to converse with me.

A few weeks after, I went to see my betrothed at Hanover, and passed June and July in the neighborhood of the Rhine; making, especially at Bonn, Frankfort, and Heidelberg, many valuable acquaintances among the friends of Goethe.

Tuesday, 10th August.

I returned to Weimar about eight days since. Goethe expressed lively joy at seeing me, and I was not less happy to be once more with him. He had so much to tell me, that I scarcely left his side for several days. He has decided not to go to Marienbad, or take any journey, this summer. "And now that you have come," said he, yesterday, "I shall pass a pleasant August here."

[Here follow some remarks on the first part of the continuation of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, which Goethe communicated to Eckermann at this time. This fragment has since been published among Goethe's posthumous works, but has never been translated into English, and the remarks would not be intelligible to those who are not acquainted with it.

I have also omitted some detached sayings of Goethe, as not being set down in a form sufficiently precise to do him justice. — TRANSL.]

Tuesday, 9th November.

I passed this evening with Goethe. We talked of Klopstock and Herder. "Without such founders," said Goethe, "our literature could not have become what it now is. In their own day they were beforehand with the age which they were obliged to drag along in their track; but now the age has far outrun them, and they are no longer necessary or influential. A young man would be left in the rear, who should take Klopstock and Herder for his teachers now-a-days."

We talked over the faults and merits both of Klopstock's "Messiah" and of his Odes. We agreed that he had no faculty for observing and painting the external world, or for drawing characters; and that he wanted the qualities most essential to the epic and dramatic poet, or, perhaps it might be said, more generally, to the poet.

"In the ode, for instance," said Goethe, "where he makes the German Muse run a race with the British,—only consider, what a picture!—two maidens running, throwing out their feet, and kicking up a dust! If the good Klopstock had ever been in the habit of really imagining, making pictures to himself of what he wrote, he could not have made such mistakes."

I asked how he had felt towards Klopstock in his youth.

"I venerated him," said Goethe, "with the devotion which was natural to me. I looked upon him as an uncle. I never once thought of criticism, but reverenced whatever he had done. I let his fine qualities work upon me; for the rest, I went my own way."

I asked Goethe which of Herder's works he thought the best. "The 'Ideas for the History of the Human Race,'" (*Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*,) replied Goethe, "are undoubtedly the best. In after days, he leaned to the negative side, and was not so edifying."

"Herder," said I, "is a person of such weight, that I cannot understand his want of judgment on some subjects. I cannot forgive him, especially at that period of German literature, for sending back the manuscript of *Goetz von Berlichingen*, without any praise of its merits, and with taunts upon its faults. He must want organs to perceive some objects."

"Yes, Herder was unfortunate in those respects," replied Goethe; "and, indeed," added he, with vivacity, "if his spirit could be present at this conversation, it would not be able to conjecture what we mean."

"On the other hand," said I, "I must praise Merck, who urged you to publish *Goetz*."

"He was indeed a strong man," said Goethe. "He urged me to publish, saying that, though imperfect, it was worth publishing. He did not wish me to labor any more on it, and he was right. I should have altered, but not improved it."

Wednesday, 24th November.

I went to see Goethe this evening, before going to the theatre, and found him well and cheerful. He inquired about the young Englishmen who are here. I told him that I proposed reading with Mr. Doolan the German translation of Plutarch. This led us

to speak of Roman and Grecian history. Goethe said,—

"The Roman history does not suit our present turn of mind. We take a more general interest in humanity, and cannot sympathize with the triumphs of Cæsar. Neither are we much edified by the history of Greece. When the whole people united against a foreign foe, then, indeed, is their history great and glorious; but the division of the states, and their eternal wars with one another, where Greek fights against Greek, are insufferable. Besides, the history of our own time is so full of important events, the battles of Leipsic and Waterloo so grand, that Marathon and other such days are entirely eclipsed. Neither are our great men inferior to theirs. Wellington, Blucher, and the French Marshals, vie with any of the heroes of antiquity."

We talked of the late French literature, and the increasing interest manifested by the French in German works.

"The French," said Goethe, "do well to study and translate our writers; for, limited as they are, both in form and principles of action, they must turn elsewhere for aid. We Germans may be reproached for the shapelessness of what we make; but in materials we have the superiority. The theatrical productions of Kotzebue and Iffland are so rich in suggestions that they may pluck a long time, before they strip the tree. But especially is our philosophical Ideality welcome to them; for every Ideal is serviceable to revolutionary aims.

"The French have understanding and *esprit*, but neither a solid basis nor piety.[1] What serves the moment, what helps his party, seems right to the Frenchman. And they praise us, not according to our merits, but to the degree in which our views may assist this or that party."

Friday, 3d December.

To-day, a proposal reached me from an English periodical. I was offered very favorable terms, if I would send to this journal monthly notices of the latest publications in our own country. I was much inclined to accept the proposal, but thought I would first consult Goethe.

I went to him this evening. He was seated before a table, on which burned two lights, which illuminated at once his own face and a colossal bust at which he was looking. "Now," said Goethe, after greeting me in a friendly manner, "who is this?" "Apparently, a poet, and an Italian," I replied. "'Tis Dante," said he. "It is well done; a fine head, yet not perfectly satisfactory. He seems bowed down with years and sorrows; the features are lax, and drawn downwards, as if he had just come from hell. I have a medal, which was struck during his life, and which is much better."

He rose and brought the medal. "Do you see how

[1] [Our word "piety" does not answer to the German *Pietat*, which expresses the natural desire of the mind to reverence something, and is not used in our sense of a conscious love of the Deity, known as such. — TRANSL.]

full of strength the profile is? Look at the nose,—at the upper lip,—see how finely the chin is marked and united with the cheek! The lines about the eyes, the forehead, are the same in this bust; but all the rest is weaker and older. Yet I will not find fault with this new work; truly, it has great merit, and deserves praise."

He then inquired what I had been doing and thinking of late. I mentioned the proposal from England, and my inclination to accept it. His face, which had worn before so pleasant and friendly an expression, clouded over instantly, and I saw in every feature how far he was from favoring this project.

"I wish," said he, "your friends would leave you in peace. What have you to do with such a plan? It lies quite out of your way, and is contrary to the tendencies of your nature. Gold, silver, paper money, all are good; but, to do justice to each, you must understand its law of exchange. And so in literature. You understand the metallic, but not the paper currency. You are not accustomed to such a task; your criticisms will be worthless, and do hurt. If you wish to be just, and give each author his proper place, you must first become acquainted with our preceding literature—no light task for you. You must look back on what the Schlegels proposed and performed, and then read our later authors, Franz Horn, Hoffmann, &c. You must also read all the journals of the day, in order that nothing which comes out may escape you; and thus misspend your best days and hours. Then all new books, which you would criticise properly, you must not only skim over, but study. How

shall you relish that? And, finally, if you venture to say that what is bad is bad, you will find yourself at war with all the world.

"No! decline the proposal; and, generally, let me say to you, beware of dissipating your powers; strive constantly to concentrate them. Had I known, thirty years ago, what I do now on this subject, I would have done very differently. How much time I lost with Schiller on his *Horen* and *Musen Almanachs!* Now, when I have just been looking over our correspondence, I feel this most forcibly, and cannot think without chagrin on those undertakings which made the world abuse us, and led to no good in any way. Genius thinks it can do whatever it sees others doing; but it will be sure to repent some time of every ill-judged outlay. What good does it do to curl up your hair for a single night? You have paper in your hair, that is all; next night it is straight again.

"Make to yourself a capital that will be permanently valuable. This you may do by the study of the English language and literature, which you have already begun. Keep to that, and make use of the advantages you now possess in the acquaintance of the young Englishmen. You have not been able greatly to avail yourself of the ancient languages during your youth; seek now a strong-hold in the literature of so able a nation as the English. And, besides, how large a portion of our literature is the offspring of theirs! Whence have we our romances, our tragedies, but from Goldsmith, Fielding, and Shakspeare? In our own day, can we find in Germany three literary heroes, who can be placed on a level with Lord Byron, Moore,

and Walter Scott? Once more, confirm yourself in your acquaintance with the English literature, concentrate your powers for some suitable work, and let all go which can lead to nothing of value to you, and is not adapted to your nature."

I rejoiced that Goethe had said so much. I was perfectly satisfied in my mind, and determined to comply with his advice.

Chancellor von Müller was now announced, and sat down with us. The conversation turned once more on the bust of Dante, and on his life and works. The obscurity of this author was mentioned, — how few of his countrymen, much less foreigners, could fully understand him. "To you," said Goethe, turning towards me, with a friendly air, "the study of this poet is absolutely forbidden by your father confessor."

Goethe also remarked that the difficult rhyme is, in a great measure, the cause of his obscurity. For the rest, he spoke of Dante with extreme reverence; and I observed that he was not satisfied with the words *talent* or *genius*, but called him *a nature*, wishing thus to express something more comprehensive, more full of prescience, of deeper insight, and wider scope.

Thursday, 9th December.

I went this evening to Goethe. He cordially held out his hand, and greeted me with praises of my poem on Schellhorn's Jubilee.

I told him that I had written to refuse the proposal from England. "Thank Heaven!" said he; "then you are free and at peace once more. And let me

give you a warning. The composers will be coming to you for an opera, — be sure you refuse that also; it is work which leads to nothing, and only wastes the time of him who undertakes it."

Goethe added, that he had, through Nees von Esenbeck, let the author of the "Paria," who is now at Bonn, know that his piece has been performed here. "Life," said he, "is short; we must miss no opportunity of giving pleasure to one another."

The Berlin Gazette lay before him, and he showed me the account of the great inundation at Petersburg. He talked of the bad situation of Petersburg, and mentioned, with a smile, the remark of Rousseau, "that none need expect to prevent earthquakes by building cities in the neighborhood of volcanic mountains." "Nature," said he, "goes steadily her own way, and what to us appears the exception, is in reality done according to the rule."

We spoke of the tempests which have raged on every shore, and the other phenomena mentioned in the journals of the day, and I asked whether he could trace the connection of all these. "No one can do that," said he; "one can scarcely have an inward feeling of the law which regulates such mysteries, much less express it."

Coudray and Professor Riemer were now announced. We continued to talk of the inundation, and Coudray, by drawings, made clear to us the plan of Petersburg, the course of the Neva, and other particulars of the locality.

Monday, 10th January, 1825.

Goethe is much interested always in the English, and has desired me to introduce to him the young Englishmen who are here at present. He appointed five o'clock this afternoon for the reception of Mr. H., the English engineer officer, of whom I had previously been able to say much good to him. We were conducted to the pleasant, well-warmed apartment, where Goethe usually passes his afternoons and evenings. Three lights were burning on the table, but he was not there; we heard him talking in the adjoining saloon.

While we waited, Mr. H. was looking about him, and observed, besides the pictures and a large chart of the hills which adorned the walls, a book-case full of portfolios. I told him these portfolios contained drawings from the hands of many celebrated masters, and engravings after the best pictures of all schools, which Goethe had, during a long life, been gradually collecting, and which now were to him a fertile source of entertainment.

After a few minutes, Goethe came in, and greeted us very cordially. He said to Mr. H., "I presume I may address you in German, as I hear you are already well versed in our language." Mr. H. answered very politely, though in few words, and Goethe requested us to be seated.

Mr. H.'s manners and appearance must have made a very favorable impression on Goethe; for his sweetness and mild serenity were manifested towards the stranger in their natural beauty. "You did well," said he, "to come hither to learn German; for you

will carry away, not only a knowledge of the language, which you will here learn easily and quickly, but of the elements on which it rests, our soil, climate, modes of life, manners, social habits, and constitution."

Mr. H. replied, "The interest taken, in England, in the study of the German language, increases daily, and has become, indeed, so general, that few young Englishmen of good families omit to learn German."

"We Germans," said Goethe, good-humoredly, "were, however, half a century beforehand with you in this matter. These fifty years, I have been busy with the English language and literature; so that I now am well acquainted with your writers, your ways of living, and the administration of your country. If I should visit England, I should not feel myself a stranger there.

"But, as I said before, you young Englishmen do well to come to us and learn our language; for, not only does our own literature merit attention, but no one can deny that he who knows German can dispense with many other languages. French, indeed, cannot be dispensed with; for it is the language of conversation, and essential to comfort in travelling, as every body understands it, and in all countries it serves you instead of an interpreter. But, as for Greek, Latin, Italian, and Spanish, we can read the best works of those nations in such excellent German translations, that, unless we have some particular object in view, we may well dispense with spending much time upon the toilsome study of their languages. It is the German nature duly to honor every thing produced by other nations, and to sympathize fully with what

is foreign. This, with the great flexibility of our language, makes German translations both faithful and complete. And you get a great deal from a good translation. Frederic the Great read Cicero in French only, but with no less profit than others who read him in Latin."

Then, turning the conversation on the theatre, he asked Mr. H. whether he went frequently thither. "Every evening," he replied, "and find that I derive from this custom great advantage in learning the language."

"It is remarkable," said Goethe, "how the power of understanding gets the start of that of expressing; so that a man may comprehend all he hears, when, as yet, he can express but a very small part of it."

"I experience daily," said Mr. H., "the truth of that remark. I understand very well whatever I hear or read; I feel it when a bad expression is made use of in German. But, when I speak, nothing will flow, and I cannot express myself as I wish. In light conversation at Court, jests with the ladies, chat at balls, and the like, I already succeed pretty well. But, if I try to express opinions on any important topic, to say any thing characteristic or of much thought, I fail utterly; the proper words will not come."

"Be not discouraged by that," said Goethe, "since fit expression of such is hard enough in one's mother tongue."

He asked what books Mr. H. had read in German. "I have read 'Egmont,'" he replied, "and found so much pleasure in the perusal, that I have repeated it three times. 'Torquato Tasso,' too, has afforded me

high enjoyment. Now, I am reading 'Faust,' which I find somewhat difficult."

Goethe laughed at these last words. "Really," said he, "I would not have advised you to undertake 'Faust.' It is mad stuff, and quite beyond the customary range of feeling. But, since you have begun without asking my advice, we shall see how you will get through. Faust is so peculiar an individual, that few men can sympathize with the situation of his mind. And the character of Mephistophiles is, on account of the irony and extensive acquaintance with the world which it displays, not easily to be comprehended. But you will see what lights open upon you. 'Tasso' lies far nearer the common feelings of men, and all there is told with a minuteness and detail very favorable to an easy comprehension of it."

"Yet," said Mr. H., "'Tasso' is thought difficult in Germany, and people have wondered to hear that I was reading it."

"What is needed for 'Tasso,'" replied Goethe, "is, that one should be no longer a child, and have been in good society. A young man of good family and capacity, with that delicacy and outward culture, which intercourse with accomplished men of the higher class will naturally produce, could find no difficulties in 'Tasso.'"

He afterwards said, "I wrote 'Egmont' in 1775,—fifty years ago. I adhered closely to history, and was very sedulous after accuracy. Ten years after, I read in the newspapers that the revolutionary scenes there described were repeating, *à la lettre*, in the Nether-

lands. I saw from this that the world remains ever the same, and that my picture must be true to life."

Amid this and other conversation, the hour for the theatre had come. We rose. and Goethe dismissed us in a friendly manner.

As we went homeward, I asked Mr. H. how he was pleased with Goethe. "I have never," said he, "seen a man who combined such attractive gentleness with such native dignity. However he may condescend, he always seems the great man."

Tuesday, 18th January, 1825.

I went to Goethe about five o'clock. I had not seen him before for some days, and passed a delightful evening. I found him talking, during the twilight, with his son, and with Hofrath Rehbein, his physician. I seated myself at the table with them. We talked awhile in the dusk; then lights were brought, and I had the happiness to see Goethe looking perfectly fresh and cheerful.

As usual, he inquired with interest what had happened to me of late, and I replied that I had made the acquaintance of a poetess. At the same time, I praised her uncommon talents, and Goethe, who was acquainted with some of her productions, agreed with me. "One of her poems," said he, "in which she describes the country near her home, is highly individual in its character. She has a good way of treating outward objects, and is not destitute of valuable inward qualities. Indeed, we might find much fault with her; but we will let her go, and not

disturb her in the path to which her talent inclines her."

The conversation turning on poetesses in general, Hofrath Rehbein remarked that the poetical talent of women often seemed to him as a sexual instinct of the intellect. "Hear him!" said Goethe, laughing, and looking at me; "that is truly the reason of a physician!"

"I know not," said Rehbein, "whether I express myself aright; but what I mean is this:—Usually, these beings have not been fortunate in love, and they seek compensation in intellectual pursuits. Had they been married, and had the care of children, they would never have thought of poetical productions."

"I will not inquire," said Goethe, "how far you are right; but, as to the talents of women in other departments, I have always found that they were not active after marriage. I have known girls who drew finely; but, so soon as they became wives and mothers, you heard no more of it: they were too busy with the children to remember the pencil.

"But our poetesses," continued he, in a lively manner, "might write as they pleased, if only our men would not write like women. That does, indeed, displease me. Look at our magazines and annuals; see how all becomes daily weaker and weaker. Were a leaf from Cellini printed in to-day's newspaper, what a figure it would make!

"However, let us forget all that, and rejoice in the powerful maiden of Halle, who with manly spirit introduces us into the Servian world. These poems are excellent." And he showed me the sheets of what he had

written upon them for *Kunst und Alterthum*, saying, "I have given, in few words, the meaning of some of these poems, and think you will be pleased with them. Rehbein, too, is not ignorant of what belongs to poetry, — at least as to its bearing and material, — and he may like to hear you read aloud from this paper."

I read it aloud, and very slowly. These descriptions were so marked and expressive, that each word seemed to present a whole poem to my eye. I was especially pleased with the following: —

1. Modesty of a Servian maiden, who never raises her beautiful eyelashes.

2. Conflict in the mind of a lover, who, as groomsman, is obliged to conduct his beloved to another.

3. Being distressed about her lover, the maiden will not sing, lest she should seem gay.

4. Complaints of the corruption of manners; how youths marry widows, and old men virgins.

5. Complaint of a youth that a mother gives her daughter too much liberty.

6. Confidingly joyous talk of a maiden with the steed who might betray to her his master's inclinations and designs.

7. Distaste of the maiden for him she cannot love.

8. The fair bar-maid: her lover is not among the guests.

9. Finding, and tenderly awaking, the lover.

10. Of what calling shall my husband be?

11. Joys of love lost by babbling.

12. The lover comes back from a journey, watches her by day, surprises her with a visit at night.

I remarked that these mere sketches excited in me such lively emotions, that I felt as if I were in possession of the whole poem, and had no desire for the details.

"That shows," said Goethe, "the great importance of situations. Our women have no conception of this. 'That poem is beautiful,' they say, and think of nothing but the feelings, the words, the verses. No one dreams that the true power of a poem consists in the choice of situation, of *Motiven*. [1] Thus are thousands of poems written, where the *Motiv* is nothing at all, and which, merely through feeling and sounding verse, represent a sort of existence. *Dilettanti*, and especially women, have very weak ideas of poetry. They think, if they could but pass by the technical part, they should have the essential, and be made people; but they are quite mistaken."

Rehbein took leave, and Professor Riemer was announced. The conversation still turned on the Servian love-lays. Riemer remarked that you need not go back to the Servians for some of these *Motiven*, which had already been used in Germany. We both remembered poems of his, and of Goethe's, in which this was the case.

"The world," said Goethe, "remains always the same; situations are constantly repeated; one people

[1] [For this frequently recurring word I cannot always find any in English which suits its position. — TRANSL.]

lives, loves, and feels like another; — why should not one poet write like another? The situations of life resemble one another; — why should not those of poems?"

"Did not," said Riemer, "such resemblances exist, how could we understand the poems of other nations?"

"I am, therefore, surprised," said I, "at those critics, who always seem to suppose that the poet goes, not from life to his poem, but from books to his poem. They are always saying, 'He got this here; he got that there.' For instance, do they meet with passages in Shakspeare which are to be found in some of the ancients, they say he must have taken them from the ancients. Because both Homer and Shakspeare, on seeing a beautiful girl, have said the parents were happy who called her daughter, and the youth who should lead her home as his bride, shall we suppose Shakspeare took the thought from Homer? As if such things came not daily within the reach of any and every one!"

"Ah, yes," said Goethe, "such criticisms are very ridiculous."

"Lord Byron," said I, "was not wiser, when he pulled 'Faust' to pieces, and pretended to find some of the materials here, some there."

"I never read," said Goethe, "the greater part of those fine things collected by Lord Byron, much less thought of them, when I was writing 'Faust.' But Lord Byron is only great as a poet; when he would reflect, he is a child. He knows not how to help himself against the stupid attacks made upon

him by his own countrymen. He ought to have put them down in a more determined manner. 'What is there, is mine,' he should have said. 'Whether I got it from a book or from life, is of no consequence, if I do but use it aright.' Walter Scott used a scene from my 'Egmont,' and he had a right to do so; I must praise him for the judicious manner in which he did it. He has also copied my Mignon, in one of his romances; but whether he was equally judicious there, is another question. Lord Byron has borrowed from Mephistophiles, and why not? If he had gone further in search after originality, he would have fared worse. My Mephistophiles sings a song from Shakspeare; why should I give myself the trouble to compose one of my own, when this was perfectly suited to express my meaning? For the same reason, there is no fault to be found with any resemblance which may exist between the prologue to my 'Faust' and that to the history of Job."

Goethe was in the best humor. He sent for wine, and filled for Riemer and me; he himself drank Marienbad water. He had appointed this evening for looking over the manuscript of the continuation of his autobiography with Riemer, in order that they might see what amendment was needed, before sending it to press. "Let Eckermann stay and hear it too," said Goethe; which words I was very glad to hear. And he then gave Riemer the manuscript, beginning with the year 1795.

I had already, in the course of the summer, had the pleasure of reading the as yet unpublished record of these years. I had read them repeatedly, and

mused much upon them. But to hear them read aloud in Goethe's presence, afforded a quite new enjoyment. Riemer received many hints as to expression, and I had occasion to admire his dexterity, and his affluence of words and phrases. The epoch described in those pages became reanimate in Goethe's mind; he revelled in recollections, and filled out the narration to the roundness of life, by the details he gave us. That was a precious evening! The most distinguished of his contemporaries were talked over; most of all, Schiller, who was so interwoven with this period, from 1795 to 1800. The theatre had given an object to the efforts of both, and Goethe's best works belong to this time. Then *Wilhelm Meister* was completed; *Hermann und Dorothea* planned and written; *Cellini* translated for the *Horen; Xenien* written by both for Schiller's *Musen Almanach;* — every day brought many points of contact. Of all this we talked this evening, and Goethe made the most interesting communications.

"*Hermann und Dorothea,*" said he, "is almost the only one of my larger poems which still satisfies me; I can never read it without strong interest. I love it best in the Latin translation; there it seems to me nobler, and as if it had returned to its original form."

In talking of *Wilhelm Meister,* — "Schiller blamed me for interweaving tragic elements which do not belong to romance. Yet he was wrong, as we all know. His letters to me contain very valuable criticisms upon *Wilhelm Meister.* But this work is a most incalculable production; I myself can scarcely be

said to have the key. The critic seeks a central point, which is, in truth, hard to find. I should think a rich manifold life, brought close to our eyes, might suffice, without any determined moral tendency which could be reasoned upon. But, if this is insisted upon, it will perhaps be found in what Frederic, at the end, says to the hero — 'Thou seem'st to me like Saul, the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom.' For what does the whole say, but that man, despite all his follies and errors, led by a higher hand, reaches some worthy aim at last?"

We then talked of the high degree of culture, which, during the last fifty years, had become general among the middle classes of Germany. Goethe ascribed the merit of this not so much to Lessing as to Herder and Wieland. "Lessing," said he, "had so superior an understanding, that only one of equal force could truly learn of him. It was dangerous to know him by halves." He mentioned a journalist who had formed himself on Lessing, and, at the end of the last century, played a part indeed, but far from a desirable one, because so inferior to his great predecessor.

"All Upper Germany," said he, "may thank Wieland for its style. It has learned many things from him; and facility of expression is not the least important."

He praised highly the *Xenien* of Schiller for their force and sharpness, deeming his own insignificant and pointless in comparison. "Schiller's *Thierkreis*," said he, "I read with ever new admiration. The good effects which the *Xenien* had upon the German literature of their own time are beyond calculation."

After much more conversation on these subjects, Goethe put aside the papers, and had a little supper placed on one end of the table by which we were sitting. We partook of it, but Goethe touched nothing; as, indeed, I have never seen him eat in the evening. He sat down with us, filled our glasses, took care of the lights, and entertained us with the most agreeable conversation. He was so full of Schiller this evening, that all this part of the conversation turned on him.

Riemer spoke of Schiller's personal appearance. "His mien, his gait in the street, all his motions," said he, "were proud; his eyes only were soft."

"Yes," said Goethe, "every thing else about him was proud and majestic, only the eyes were soft. And his genius was like his outward form. He seized boldly on a great subject, turning it hither and thither, and looking at it on every side. But he saw, as I may say, only the outside of an object; he could not enter into it, and quietly unfold it from within. His talent was rather desultory. Thus he was never decided, could never be sure he had done. He often altered parts just before a rehearsal.

"And, as he went so boldly to work, he did not take sufficient pains to provide his actions with motives. I had trouble enough with him about a scene in his 'William Tell,' where he made Gessler abruptly break an apple from the tree, and bid Tell shoot it from his boy's head. This was very uncongenial to me, and I urged him to give some motive to Gessler's conduct, by at least making the boy boast to Gessler of his father's dexterity, and say that he

could shoot an apple from a tree at a hundred paces' distance. Schiller, at first, could see no need of this; but, in the end, he yielded. I, on the other hand, by too great attention to motives, injured my pieces for the theatre. My 'Eugenie,' being nothing but a chain of motives, is not suited to the stage.

"Schiller's genius was made for the theatre. He constantly grew more and more complete; but a love for the terrible lingered with him from the time of his 'Robbers,' which, in his prime, still tinged his thoughts. In the prison scene of my 'Egmont,' where the sentence is read to him, Schiller wished to have Alva in the background, muffled in a cloak, and enjoying the sight of Egmont's emotion. Thus Alva was to appear a man of boundless malice, and insatiate in vengeance. I protested, and prevented the apparition. However, he was a great and admirable man.

"Every eight days became he other and greater than before; each time that I saw him, he seemed to me to have gone forward in knowledge and judgment. His letters are the fairest mementoes of him which I possess, as they are also among the most excellent of his writings. His last letter I preserve, as a consecrated thing, among my treasures." He rose to get it. "See and read for yourself," said he, giving it to me.

It was a very fair letter, yet written in a bold hand. It contained an opinion of Goethe's notes to "Rameau's Nephew," which give an idea of the state of French literature at that time, and which he had lent Schiller to look over. I read the letter aloud to Riemer. "You see," said Goethe, "how precise

and to the point his judgment is, and that the handwriting has nowhere any trace of weakness. This magnificent (*prächtig*) man went from us in the fulness of his powers."

This letter bears date of 24th April, 1805. Schiller died the 9th May. We examined the letter together, and admired the clear style, and the beautiful writing. Goethe said many more affectionate words of his departed friend. It was nearly eleven when we took our leave.

Thursday, 24th February.

"If I were still superintendent of the theatre," said Goethe, this evening, "I would bring Byron's 'Doge of Venice' upon the stage. The piece is too long; but I would blot out nothing. I would only take the import of each scene, and try to express it more concisely. The piece would thus become more effective, without losing any of its peculiar beauties."

I observed that Lord Byron, in his conversations with Medwin, had said, that to write for the theatre was a difficult task, and one which is not rewarded by gratitude. "That," said Goethe, "depends on the tact of the poet. If he follow the direction which the taste and interest of the public has taken, he will have no cause to complain. Houwald did this with his *Bilde*, and won universal applause. But the tendency of Lord Byron's mind did not coincide with that of the public. His greatness doth not here avail the poet; rather are those the greatest favorites who rise but little above the level of the public.

"No man ever possessed what I call inventive power in a higher degree than Lord Byron. His manner of loosing the dramatic knot always surpasses our expectations."

"That," said I, "is what I feel about Shakspeare, when Falstaff has entangled himself in such a net of falsehoods, and Shakspeare helps him out so much more dexterously than I had expected."

Goethe laughed about Lord Byron's slavery to the unities; that he who never could accommodate himself to the laws by which life is regulated, finally subjected himself to so stupid a law as that.

"He understood the meaning of this law," said Goethe, "no better than the rest of the world. All such laws are intended to make a work more intelligible; the three unities are only good as they subserve this end. If the observance of them hinders, rather than assists the apprehension of a work, it is foolish to observe them. Even the Greeks, who invented the rule, were not invariably governed by it. In the 'Phaeton' of Euripides, and other pieces, the scene changes, and it is obvious that they were not blindly obedient to their law when it interfered with an advantageous representation of the subject. The pieces of Shakspeare are planned without any regard to the unities of time and place; but, as they produce a perfect illusion, none more than they, the Greeks would never have found fault with them. The French, by their superstitious adherence to the unities, have injured the illusion; loosing the dramatic knot, not in dramatic wise, but by narration."

I called to mind the *Feinde* of Houwald. The author of this drama certainly stood in his own light, when he, to preserve the unity of place, injured the illusion in the very first act, and generally sacrificed effect for a whimsey. I thought, too, of *Goetz von Berlichingen*, where no regard is paid to unity of time or place, but every thing being unfolded at once, and brought before our eyes, nothing can be more dramatic in its effect, or more easy to apprehend, than the piece. I thought that the unities of time and place should be preserved according to the intentions of the Greeks only when the author chooses a subject of limited range, where it may be done naturally; but that a large subject asks more liberty, especially now that stage arrangements are so favorable to a change of scene.

Goethe continued to talk of Lord Byron. "Though his disposition," said he, "was always leading him into the illimitable, yet the restraint of the three unities suited him very well. Had he known how to endure moral restraint as well! That he could not, was his ruin: he himself avows it.

"But he was much in the dark about himself. He lived impetuously for the day, and neither knew nor thought what he was doing. Permitting every thing to himself, and excusing nothing in others, how could he but ruin himself, and make the whole world his foe? At the very beginning, he offended the most distinguished literary men by his 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' To be permitted to live after this, he was obliged to go back a step. In his succeeding works, he continued the system of opposition and

fault-finding. Church and State were assailed. His reckless conduct, which drove him from England, would at last have driven him from Europe also. Every where it was too narrow for him. In the most perfect personal freedom, he felt himself confined. The world seemed to him a prison. His Grecian expedition was not made of free will; his false position in the world obliged him to do something of that sort.

"His renunciation of what was hereditary or patriotic not only injured his fortunes, though so distinguished a person, but his revolutionary turn, and the constant mental agitation with which it was combined, never permitted his genius a fair development. And the perpetual negation and fault-finding of these otherwise excellent works is pernicious. Not only does the discontent of the writer infect the reader, but the end of all is negation; that is to say, nothing. If I call *bad* bad, what do I win? But if I call *good* bad, I lose much. He who would work aright must never rail, — must not trouble himself about what is already ill done, — but do well himself. Humanity finds its true joy, not in tearing to pieces, but in building anew.

"Lord Byron is to be regarded as a man, as an Englishman, and as a great genius. His good qualities belong to the man, his bad to the Englishman and the peer; his genius is incommensurable.

"All Englishmen are, as such, without reflection; distractions and party spirit will not permit them to unfold themselves in quiet. But they are great as practical men."

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"But when he would create, he always succeeds; inspiration supplies the place of reflection. He never fails when he speaks out his own feelings as a man.

"His genius is great; he was born great; none has greater poetic power. But Shakspeare's individuality is superior. Byron felt this so much, that he talks but little of Shakspeare, though he knew great part of his works by heart. He would willingly have set him aside; for Shakspeare's cheerfulness was in his way, and gave him a feeling of inferiority. He can talk of Pope, because he does not fear him. He praises him as much as he can, for he knows that Pope is a mere wall to him.

"His high rank, as an English peer, was very injurious to Byron, for all genius is oppressed by the outer world; — how much more by high rank and great possessions! The middle station is most favorable to genius; you find the great artists and poets there. Byron's wild love of freedom would not have been half so dangerous to him in a lower station. But he could do what he pleased, and thus was led to entangle himself a thousand ways. No rank or name could awe him into respect. He spoke out whatever he felt, and so began the war with the world which ended not during his life.

"It is astonishing how large a portion of his life an English noble passes in elopements and duels. Lord Byron says his father carried off three women. His practice of shooting at a mark shows his own daily expectation of duels.

"He could not live alone. Therefore, notwithstanding all his caprices, he was very indulgent to his

associates. He read aloud one evening his beautiful poem on the death of Sir John Moore, and his noble friends could not tell what to make of it. He cared not, but quietly put it away again. Surely, as a poet, he showed himself a very lamb. Some men could not have refrained from an oath or two."

Wednesday, 20th April.

Goethe showed me to-night a letter from a young student, who begs the plan for the second part of "Faust," with the design of completing it himself. Without circumlocution, and in the most perfect good faith, this youth manifests his conviction that all other literary efforts of later years have been naught, and that only in his own can it be expected that literature shall bloom again.

If I should meet young men who long to carry out Napoleon's plans of conquest, or one of those young *Dilettanti* in architecture who think they could complete the Cathedral of Cologne, I should not be more surprised and amused, than by this poetical amateur, who fancies he could write the second part of "Faust" because he admires the first.

Indeed, I think the completion of the Cathedral of Cologne a more practicable enterprise than that of continuing "Faust" on Goethe's plan. For the one is tangible, and capable of mathematical measurement; but what line or measure could avail for a work in which the plan depends on spiritual discernment, the materials must be furnished from so long and rich a life, and the execution requires the tact and practice of a master?

He who esteems such a work easy, shows thereby the ordinary texture of an intellect which cannot divine the difficulties which attend every noble achievement, and probably would be unequal to supply the gap of a few lines, if Goethe had left one which required them. I will not in this place inquire why it is that the young men of our day suppose themselves endowed at their birth with powers which have hitherto required the experiences and labor of many years to bring them to light, but shall content myself with observing, that this presumptuousness, now so common in Germany, which would stride so hastily over the steps of needful culture, affords little hope of our being enriched with new masterpieces.

"Our misfortune is," said Goethe, "that in the state, nobody can enjoy life in peace, because every body must needs govern; and in art, that nobody is willing to enjoy what has been produced without immediately trying to reproduce. No poet can be permitted to help himself in a way of his own, unless others can do the same as he does. There is, besides, no one earnest mind which can remember the All, no willingness to be subordinate to a grand design; but each one tries to play his own part, so that he individually may be observed. We see this at our concerts, where the modern virtuosos, instead of selecting their pieces with a view to giving the audience the highest musical enjoyment, bring forward only those in which they can exact most admiration. Every where you find these people striving to attract attention to their paltry individualities, no where those

who care more for the thing they are doing than for their own celebrity.

"Hence it is that these men become such pitiful botchers, without knowing it. As children, as youths, they keep scribbling, and, when manhood has brought some insight of the true nature of excellence, they look back in despair on the years they have wasted.

"But many never do get such insight, and keep on doing things by halves, content, through life, with this mutilated offspring.

"Certainly, if they could early enough be made to feel how full the world is already of excellent productions, and how much must be done to produce any thing worthy of being placed beside what has already been produced, — of a hundred youths who are now pouring forth their poems to the public, scarce one would have felt courage to look up to such an aim.

"Many young painters would have dropped their pencils at once, if they could have felt what an assemblage of rare qualifications is required to constitute a Raphael."

The conversation turned upon false tendencies in general, and Goethe continued —

"My tendency to practise painting was a false one, for there was in me no talent for the art worth developing. A delicate sensibility to the landscape which surrounded me I did possess by nature, and, consequently, my first attempts looked promising. The journey to Italy took away all my pleasure in practice; the appearance of talent, which sympathy with the object had given, disappeared; a wider com-

prehension took its place; but, as neither technical nor æsthetic talents were unfolded, my efforts melted away into nothing at last.

"It is justly felt, and said, that the complete unfolding of all human powers is the proper aim of man. But the individual is not born for this; he must content himself with perfecting such powers as he is peculiarly endowed with, only seeking to obtain the Idea which would result from the aggregate of all these individual forces."

I thought of that passage in *Wilhelm Meister*, in which it is said that humanity is the sum of all men taken together, and each is only so far worthy of esteem as he knows how to appreciate all.

I thought, too, of Jarno's words, in the *Wanderjahre*, where he advises each man to learn some mechanic art, and styles that man the fortunate who understands that this is the time proper to one-sidedness, and, in that knowledge, keeps at work for himself and others.

Then comes the question, What occupation shall a man choose, in which he may neither overstep his proper limits, nor do too little?

He whose business it is to overlook many departments, to judge, to guide others, has the best opportunity for an insight into many. Thus a prince, or he who would be a statesman, cannot aim too much at such insight; for many-sidedness is indispensable to him.

The poet, too, should have manifold knowledge, for his subject is the world.

But, as the poet need be neither a painter nor an

actor, though he partly does in words what they do in their different vocations, so should we every way separate insight into a thing from practical power to use it. Each art for its practice requires a life.

Thus Goethe, while striving for insight to many things, has contented himself with doing well one thing, i. e. writing the German language, (*Deutsch zu schreiben.*) That his materials are of various nature, affects not his rule as to practice.

General culture of the tastes is not to be confounded with practical ability in details. The poet must use every means to cultivate his eye. And, if Goethe's attempts at drawing and painting failed of their object, they were of use in cultivating him as a poet.

"The objectivity of my poetry," said he, "may be attributed to this discipline of eye; and I highly prize the knowledge which I have attained in this way.

"But we must take care not to place too far off even the limits of our culture.

"The natural philosopher is, perhaps, in most danger of this, because general harmonious culture of the faculties is so necessary to the adequate observation of nature.

"But, on the other hand, let each man, as soon as he distinctly ascertains what he must know and do in his own department, guard himself against one-sidedness and narrow views.

"A poet, who writes for the stage, must understand its capabilities. The opera-composers must have some understanding of poetry, lest they waste their time and

strength in attempting what, from the nature of things, cannot be accomplished.

"Von Weber, for instance, must see at once, that the *Euryanthe* is not a fit subject for him. The painter must know what subjects are fit for him, and what transcend the limits of Art.

"But, when all is said, the great art is judiciously to limit and isolate one's self."

Accordingly, he has, ever since I have been with him, been constantly seeking to guard me against distractions, even those which had valuable objects. If I showed an inclination to penetrate the secrets of science, he would advise me to let it alone, and confine myself to poetry for the present. If I wished to read a book which he thought had no bearing on my present pursuits, he would advise me to let it alone, and concentrate my attention as much as possible on my own vocation.

"I myself," said he, one day, "have spent too much time on things which had no relation to my proper department. When I remember what Lopez de Vega accomplished, the list of my poetical productions seems very scanty. I should have followed my own vocation with more earnestness and constancy."

"If I had not busied myself so much with stones," said he, another time, "but spent my time on something better, I might have won the finest ornament of diamonds."

And he highly esteems and praises his friend Meyer for having devoted his life exclusively to the study of Art, and thus having obtained the finest insight into his own department.

"Though I have spent," said he, "half my life in the contemplation and study of works of art, I am not on a par with Meyer. I never venture to show him a new picture, till I think I have got all I can from it. When I have studied it till I think I am fully acquainted both with its beauties and defects, I show it to Meyer, who fails not to look more sharply into the matter, and give me many new lights. I am ever anew convinced how much is needed to be great in any department. In Meyer lies an insight into art, such as thousands of years may ripen."

Why, then, it may be asked, if Goethe be persuaded that one man can only do one thing well, has he, beyond all men, turned his activity into various directions?

I answer, that, if Goethe were now coming upon the stage, and found the literary and scientific culture of this country at the point which it has now, and in good measure through him, attained, he certainly would not turn his attention into such various directions, but concentrate it in one.

Not only his nature, but the needs of his time, led him to seek and speak on so many subjects.

A large inheritance of error and incompleteness fell to his share, and called for good management on many sides.

If the Newtonian theory had not seemed to him highly pernicious to the human mind, he would surely never have devoted so many years' labor to such a work as his *Farbenlehre*. It was his love of truth, and hatred of error, which forced him to make his pure light shine into this darkness.

The same may be said of that model for the scientific treatment of a subject, for which we are so greatly indebted to him — the "Metamorphosis of Plants." It is an effort he would never have made, if he had seen any of his contemporaries on the way to make it unnecessary. And I doubt whether he would have written "Wilhelm Meister," if his country had been possessed of any such work. In that case he might probably have devoted himself to the drama. What he might then have accomplished, we cannot know; but, I think, no intelligent man, who looks at all sides of the question, will regret that he went the way his Creator was pleased to call him.

Thursday, 12th May.

Goethe spoke with great enthusiasm of Menander. "I love him," said he, "next to Sophocles. He is every where noble, genuine, sublime, and cheerful; his grace and sweetness are unequalled. It is greatly to be lamented that we have so little of his; but that little is invaluable, gifted men may learn so much from it.

"The great point is, that he from whom we would learn should be congenial with our nature. Now, Calderon, great as he is, and much as I admire him, could exert no influence over me for good or for ill. But he would have been dangerous to Schiller; he would have led him astray; it is fortunate for Schiller that Calderon was not generally known in Germany till after his time. Calderon is infinitely great in whatever is technical or theatrical; Schiller, on the

contrary, far more manly, profound, and dignified, in his design. It would have been a pity if he had lost something of his peculiar greatness, without attaining what belonged to Calderon."

We spoke of Molière. "Molière," said Goethe, "is so great, that he astonishes me anew every time I read him. He is a man by himself — his pieces border on tragedy — they are apprehensive — no one dares to imitate them. His 'Miser,' where all the piety of natural relations is outraged by father and son, is grand, and in a high sense tragic. But when, in the German paraphrase, the son is changed into a relation, the whole is weakened, and loses its significance. They feared to show the vice as hideous as he did; but what is there, or any where, tragic, except what is intolerable?

"I read some pieces of Molière's every year, just as I look often at engravings after the works of the great Italian masters. For we little men are not able to retain in the mind the idea of such greatness; we must return from time to time, and renew the impression from the work.

"People are always talking about originality; but what do they mean? As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us, and keeps on to the end. What can we call ours, except energy, strength, will? If I could give an account of what I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small remainder.

"However, the time of life in which we are subjected to a new and important influence, makes great difference in our reception of it. That Lessing,

Winckelmann, and Kant, were born before me, so that the two first acted upon my youth, and the latter on my riper years, — this circumstance had a great deal to do with my progress. That Schiller was so much younger than I, and engaged in his most earnest strivings, just as I began to be weary of the world, at the same time that the brothers von Humboldt and Schlegel were beginning their career under my eye, — these circumstances also have great significance, and from them I have derived innumerable advantages."

The conversation then turned on the influence which he had exerted over others. I mentioned Bürger, inquiring whether his strong natural tendency had been at all modified by the influence of Goethe.

"Bürger," said Goethe, "had affinity with me in the nature of his genius; but the tree of his moral culture had its root in a wholly different soil, and sprung up in a wholly different direction. Each man proceeds as he began, in the ascending line of his culture. A man who, in his thirtieth year, could write such a poem as *Frau Schnips*, had obviously taken a path which must lead him far from mine. Also had he, by his really fine talents, won for himself a public which he perfectly satisfied; and he had no need of troubling himself about a contemporary who was at work in quite another region.

"Every where, men learn only from men and things which they love. However the growing minds of the present day may be disposed towards me, scarce one man, of any weight, was, for a long while, perfectly satisfied with me. Even with *Werther*, people found

so much fault, that, if I had erased every passage with which some one had been displeased, there would not have been a single line left. But I never have troubled myself about that; such subjective judgments of individuals are at last rectified by the majority. He who does not expect a million readers had best never write a line.

"The public have been quarrelling these twenty years, as to which is the greatest — Schiller or I; they ought to rejoice that they know two men worth quarrelling about."

Saturday, 11th June.

Goethe talked much at dinner of Major Parry's book upon Lord Byron. He gave it unqualified praise, and remarked that Lord Byron here appears far more complete a character, and more clear in his account of himself and his plans, than in any book which has been written about him.

"Major Parry," said he, "must be a noble and intelligent man, so fully to have conceived, and so clearly to have represented, the character of his friend. One passage in his book pleases me particularly; it is worthy of an old Greek — of a Plutarch. 'This noble lord,' says Parry, 'was destitute of all the virtues which adorn civil life; neither birth, education, nor mode of life, assisted him in their attainment, while a large portion of his judges are from the middle class, and blame him for wanting such virtues as they most value in themselves. The good people do not feel that he possessed, for his high station, qualities of whose nature and value they can form no

idea.' How do you like that? Do you think any thing so good is to be heard every day?"

I replied that I was rejoiced to see expressed a view which must discomfit all little men, who are busied in blaming and pulling down one whose place is above them.

We then spoke of subjects of national history in relation to poetry, inquiring how far the history of one nation may be more favorable to the poet than another.

"Let the poet," said Goethe, "seize the Particular, and, if he uses it well, he cannot fail therein to represent the Universal. The English history is excellent for poetry; it has so healthy, and, therefore, so universal an expression, in its details, and always ideas that must be repeated. The French history, on the other hand, affords no material for poetry, as it represents an era that cannot come again. Thus the literature of the French, in so far as it is founded on their history, stands as something of no universal interest, and which must grow old with its time.

"The present era of French literature cannot be judged fairly. The German influence causes such a fermentation there, that we probably shall not know the result these twenty years."

We then talked of the æsthetic school, who labor so hard to express the nature of poetry and the poet in abstract definitions, without ever arriving at any clear result.

"What need of these laborious definitions?" said Goethe. "Lively feeling of a situation, and power to express it, constitute the poet."

Wednesday, 15th October.

I found Goethe in a very elevated mood this evening, and had the pleasure of hearing from him many significant remarks. We talked over the state of the newest literature, and he said —

"Deficiency of character in individual writers and seekers is the source of all the evils of our newest literature.

"Especially in criticism, the world suffers from this, while either falsehoods circulate as verities, or a petty and pitiful truth robs us of something great, which would be far better.

"Till lately, the world believed in the heroism of a Lucretia, — of a Mucius Scævola, — and suffered itself, by this belief, to be warmed and inspired. But now comes your historical critic, and says no such persons ever lived, — all this is mere fiction — the result of the great thoughts of the Romans. And if it be so, what care we for so pitiful a truth? If the Romans had the greatness to invent such stories, shall we not, at least, have the greatness to believe them?

"Till lately, I had pleased myself with a noble passage in the thirteenth century, when the Emperor Frederic the Second was at variance with the Pope, and the north of Germany was open to attacks from every side. Asiatic hordes had pressed as far as Silesia, when the Duke von Liegnitz met and terrified them by one great defeat. They turned to Moravia, and were again defeated by Count Sternberg. These valiant men had long been living in my heart as the saviors of Germany. But now comes your historical critic, and says these heroes sacrificed themselves

quite uselessly — the barbarians were already recalled, and must have returned if they had done nothing. So is the narrative robbed of all its noble patriotic beauty, and become wholly detestable to my thoughts."

He then spoke of another class of seekers and literary men.

"I could never," said he, "have fully comprehended how paltry men are, and how little they care for high aims, if I had not had such opportunity to test them in the course of my scientific researches. Now, I saw that most men only care for science in so far as they can get a living by it, and that they are ready to worship any error which they find profitable for this object.

"In *belles lettres*, it is no better. There, high aims, genuine love for the true and fair, and desire for diffusing it, are equally wanting. One man cherishes and tolerates another, because he is by him cherished and tolerated in return. True greatness is hateful to them; they would fain shape the world so that only such as they could find a place in it. Such are the masses; and prominent individuals are little better.

"———'s great talents and extensive learning might have conferred the greatest benefits on his country. But his want of character has prevented his effecting such objects, or winning our esteem.

"We want a man like Lessing. For how was he great, except in character, in his firmness, which could not be moved? There are many men as wise, of as extensive culture; but where shall we find another such character?

"Many are full of intellect and knowledge, but they are also full of vanity; and, in their desire to shine before the short-sighted multitude, they forget all shame, all delicacy — nothing is sacred to them.

"Madame de Genlis was perfectly right to declaim as she did against the bold irreverence of Voltaire. What has the world been profited by all his intellect, since it affords a foundation for nothing? Indeed, what has it not lost, by what has confused men, and robbed them of their foothold?

"What know we at last, and how far can we go with all our fine wit?

"Man is not born to solve the problem of the universe, but to find out with what it has to do, and then restrain himself within the limits of his power of comprehension.

"He cannot measure the transactions of the universe; neither his powers nor his point of view justify him in such an ambition. The reason of man and the reason of God are very different things.

"If you grant God omniscience, man cannot be free; if the Divinity knows how I shall act, I *must* act so. I touch upon this merely as an illustration of how little we can know, and how foolish it is to meddle with divine mysteries.

"Also, we are not obliged to utter our higher maxims, except when they can benefit the world. Let us keep them within ourselves, when they are not likely to do good without; they will not fail to diffuse over our actions the mild radiance of a hidden sun."

Sunday, 25th December.

I found Goethe alone this evening, and passed with him some delightful hours.

"My mind," said he, "has, of late, been burdened by many things. So much good has been flowing in to me on all sides, that the mere ceremony of returning thanks has occupied all my time, and prevented me from having any real life. The privileges for the publication of my works have been gradually coming from the Court; and as the favors came from different individuals, I was obliged to express my sense of them to each separately. Then came the proposals of innumerable booksellers, all of which must be considered, acted upon, and answered. Then my Jubilee has brought me such thousand-fold attentions and benefits, that I have not yet got through with my letters of acknowledgment. And I cannot be content with hollow generalities, but am desirous to say something distinct and appropriate to each one. But now I am almost free, and begin to be again disposed for conversation.

"I have, of late, made an observation, which I will impart to you.

"Every thing we do has its results. But the right and prudent does not always lead to good, or contrary measures to bad; frequently the reverse takes place. Some time since, I made a mistake in one of these transactions with booksellers, and was disturbed that I had done so. But, as circumstances have turned out, it would have been very unfortunate if I had not made that very mistake. Such instances occur frequently in life, and it is the observation of them

which enables men of the world to go to work with such freedom and boldness."

I was struck by this remark, which was new to me.

I then turned the conversation on his own works, and we came upon the elegy "Alexis and Dora."

"Men blame," said Goethe, "the strong, passionate close of this poem, and would rather the elegy should end gently and peacefully, without that outbreak of jealousy; but I cannot agree with such an opinion. Jealousy is so manifestly an ingredient of the affair, that the poem would be incomplete if it were not introduced at all. I myself knew a youth who, in the midst of his most impassioned love for an easily-won maiden, cried out, 'But would she not receive another man as readily as me?'"

I agreed entirely with Goethe, and mentioned the skill with which, in this poem, all is so painted, though with but few strokes, and in little room, that we think we see the life and domestic environment of the persons. "I should think it must be a page from actual experience," said I.

"I am glad it seems so to you," said Goethe. "Few men have any taste for faithful painting of reality; they much prefer strange countries and circumstances, in which the fancy may exercise itself unrestrained.

"There are others, however, who cling too closely to reality, and, wholly wanting the poetic spirit, are severe indeed in their requisitions. For instance, in this very poem, some would have had me give Alexis a servant to carry his bundle, and never dreamt that all that was poetic and idyllic in the situation would have been destroyed by such an arrangement."

We talked then of "Wilhelm Meister." "There are odd critics in this world," said Goethe; "they blamed me for letting the hero of this romance live so much in bad company; but I considered this so called bad company, as a vase, in which I could put every thing good I had to say, and I won thereby a poetical and manifold body for my work. Had I delineated the so called good society by means of the same, nobody would have read my book.

"In the seemingly mean details of 'Wilheim Meister,' lies always at bottom a high meaning, which he who has eye, knowledge of the world, and power of comprehension to infer the great from the little, will detect; to others, let it suffice to receive the picture of life as real life."

Goethe then showed me a very interesting English work, which illustrated all Shakspeare, by engravings. Each leaf embraced, in six small designs, one piece. Verses were written beneath, which recalled the leading ideas and most interesting situations of each work. Thus all these immortal dramas were brought before the eye, as if by processions of marks.

"It is even terrifying," said Goethe, "to look through this book. It makes me feel the infinite wealth and grandeur of Shakspeare. There is nothing in human life to which he has not given form and voice; and all with what ease and freedom!

"But it is in vain to talk about Shakspeare; we can never say any thing adequate. I have touched upon the subject in my 'Wilheim Meister,' but could do little. He is not a theatre poet; he never thought of the stage; it was far too narrow for his great

intellect; truly, the whole visible world was too narrow.

"He is even too rich and powerful. Let no mind, which would produce any thing, venture on reading more than one of his dramas yearly. I did well to set him wholly aside when writing 'Goetz' and 'Egmont,' and Byron did well in cherishing no admiration for him, and keeping in another way. Calderon and he have been the ruin of many an excellent German.

"Shakspeare offers us golden apples in silver dishes. We get the silver dishes by studying his works; but, unfortunately, we have nothing better than potatoes to put into them."

I laughed, and was delighted with this admirable illustration.

Goethe showed me a letter from Zelter, describing a representation of Macbeth at the theatre in Berlin, where the music did not correspond with the grand spirit and character of the piece. Goethe's reading gave full effect to Zelter's varied expression, and he often paused, to admire, with me, some striking passage.

"'Macbeth,' said he, "is Shakspeare's best acting play, the one in which he shows most understanding of stage effect. But would you see his intellect unfettered, read 'Troilus and Cressida,' and see how he uses the materials of the Iliad in his fashion."

We talked of Byron, of the disadvantage to which he appears, when placed beside the innocent cheerfulness of Shakspeare, and of the lavish and generally not unjust blame, which his manifold works of negation

had attracted. "Could he," said Goethe, "have got rid, in Parliament, of all the opposition that was in him, he would have stood much higher as a poet; but, as he scarcely had a chance to speak in Parliament, all which he had in his heart against his nation was repressed, and he had no outlet for it except his poems. Great part of his works of negation might, I think, be fitly designated as suppressed parliamentary speeches."

We talked of a poet who has lately risen up in Germany, who has become celebrated in a short time, but whose tendency to negation is indefensible. "Undoubtedly," said Goethe, "he possesses many shining qualities, but then he is wanting in — Love. He loves his readers and his fellow-poets no better than himself, so that we are constantly tempted to address him in the words of the apostle — 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.'

"I have lately read one of his poems, and his genius is not to be denied; but without Love he can never make himself all he might be. He will be feared, and be the idol of those who would gladly distinguish themselves by denying as much as he does, if they had but his genius."

Sunday evening, 29th January, 1826.

The most celebrated German improvisatore, Dr. Wolff, of Hamburg, has been here several days, and has given public exhibitions of his rare talent. On Friday evening, he gave us a very brilliant exhibition before the Court of Weimar, and a numerous audi-

ence; that same day he received an invitation to dine with Goethe.

I talked with him after he had improvised before Goethe. He was much delighted, and declared that this hour would make an epoch in his life; for Goethe, in a few words, had opened to him a wholly new path, and had, in his criticisms, hit the right nail on the head.

This evening, as I was at Goethe's, the conversation turned immediately on Wolff. "He congratulates himself greatly," said I, "on the good advice your excellency has given him."

"I was perfectly free with him," said Goethe, "and if my words have made such an impression on him, that is a very good sign. His talents are indubitable; but he has the general sickness of the day — subjectivity — and I would fain heal him. I gave him this task to try him: — 'Paint for me,' said I, 'your return to Hamburg.' He began immediately to pour out melodious verses. I could not but admire his facility, yet I could not praise him; for he painted no return to Hamburg, but merely those emotions which any one might experience on returning to his parents, relations, and friends; and his poem no more deserved the name of *return to Hamburg*, than to Merseburg or Jena. Yet, what an individual, peculiar city is Hamburg! and what a rich field it would have offered him for striking pictures, if he had known or ventured to take hold of the subject properly!"

I remarked that this subjective tendency was the fault of the public, which applauds nothing so much as sentimentality.

"Perhaps so," said Goethe; "yet is the public well pleased if you offer something better. I am certain, if a man of such genius as Wolff could improvise faithful sketches of real life in great cities, such as Rome, Naples, Vienna, Hamburg, or London, so that they might believe they saw with their own eyes, his hearers would be enchanted. I am sure he might break through to the objective, for he is not without imagination; but, if he does not soon take the right path, it will be too late."

"That," said I, "will not be easy, since it demands entire regeneration of his modes of thought. Even if he succeeds, he must, for some time, stop producing, and will require long practice to make the objective style as natural as the present."

"Yet," said Goethe, "let him take courage, and venture. It is in such matters as in going to bathe — disregard the first chill, and a new element is yours. Must not the singer find new tones, not natural to his throat, if he would do justice to his art? Just so with the poet; — he deserves not the name when he only speaks out those few subjective feelings which are his as an individual. Only when he can appropriate and tell the story of the world is he a poet; and there he is inexhaustible, and can be always new, while your subjective writer has soon talked out his limited knowledge, and is ruined by mannerism. We are bid to study the ancients; yet what does that avail us, if it does not teach us to study the real world, and reproduce that? — for there was the source of the power of the ancients."

He walked to and fro a few minutes, while I re-

mained seated at the table, as he likes to have me. Then, after standing a moment at the stove, he came to me, his finger on his lips, and said,

"I will now tell you something, of which I think you will find frequent confirmation in your experience. When eras are on the decline, all tendencies are subjective; but, on the other hand, when matters are ripening for a new epoch, all tendencies are objective. Our present time is retrograde, therefore subjective; we see this not more clearly in poetry than in painting, and other ways. Each manly effort, on the contrary, turns its force from the inward to the outward world. In important eras, those who have striven and acted most manfully were all objective in their nature."

These remarks led to a most interesting conversation upon the great deeds of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The conversation now turned upon the theatre, and the weak, sentimental, gloomy productions which now disgrace it.

"Molière is my strength and consolation at present," said I; "I have been translating his *Avare*, and am now busy with his *Médicin malgré lui*. Molière is indeed a great, a genuine man."

"Yes," said Goethe, "a genuine man; that is indeed his proper praise. There is nothing borrowed or factitious in him. He ruled the manners of his day, while our Iffland and Kotzebue are ruled by theirs, and every way limited and confined. Molière chastised men by painting them just as they were."

"What would I not give," said I, "to see his dramas properly acted! Yet are such things much

too strong and natural for our public. Is not this over-refinement to be attributed to the so called ideal literature of certain authors?"

"No," said Goethe, "it has its source in society itself. Now, we have young girls at the theatre; when Molière wrote, nobody came to see his pieces but men and women, who know things as they are. In his day, young girls were in their proper place, the cloister; but, since they have once got the *entrée*, we must needs be discreet for their sake; and one who, like me, does not like such weak dramas, had best stay away, as I do. I ceased to feel really interested in the theatre when I ceased to be able to improve their acting. It was my delight to bring dramatic arrangements to their perfection among us, and when a piece was given, I sympathized less with it than with the actors. I noted the faults of each; I sent a written account of them to the manager, and was sure I should not see them again. Now, if I were present, I must endure faults and defects without any hope of reforming them. And so about the reading of pieces. Why must the young German poets be eternally sending me tragedies? Formerly, I consented to read them, to see whether they were fit to play. What have I to do now with the works of these young people? I get nothing by reading things so badly done, and I can do no good when they have already finished. If they would send one, instead of printed plays, plans for plays, it might be worth my while to say, 'Do this,' or 'Don't do that,' and then my trouble might not be wholly vain. The chief difficulty is in this, — that poetic culture is so general

in Germany that nobody now ever makes a bad verse. These young poets who send me their works, are not inferior to their predecessors, and, since you can praise them so highly, they cannot understand why you will not praise them more. Yet how can we praise them, when there is so much talent just of that degree in the market, and they bring us what we do not need, while so many useful things remain undone? Were there so much as one who towered above the rest, it would be well, for the world can be served only by what is extraordinary.

Thursday, 16th February, 1826.

I went, at seven this evening, to Goethe. I sat down by the table, and told him that yesterday I had seen, at the inn, the Duke of Wellington, who was passing through, on his way to St. Petersburg. "Indeed!" said Goethe; "tell me all about it. Does he look like his portrait?"

"Yes," said I; "but his face is better. It is very distinguished, and when you have once looked at himself, all the portraits are nought. It is one of those faces, which, once seen, are never forgotten. His brown eyes are very clear and brilliant; his look is impressive; his mouth speaks, even when it is shut; he looks a man who has had many thoughts, and who has lived through the greatest deeds, who now can look upon the world with serene satisfaction, for he has vanquished all hostile powers. He seemed to me as hard and keen as a Damascus blade. He looks near fifty, upright, of a good mien, but rather thin. I saw him get into his carriage: his manner, as he

passed through the crowd assembled at the door, and slightly touched his hat in reply to their salutations, was unusually cordial." Goethe listened with visible interest. "You are a gainer," said he; "you have seen a hero." I lamented that I had never seen Napoleon.

"Truly," said Goethe, "that also was worth the trouble. He looked, as he was, the compendium of a world."

I had brought with me for Goethe a poem, of which I had spoken to him some evenings before — one of his own, written so long since that he has quite forgotten it. It was printed in a Frankfort periodical, of the year 1776. An old servant of Goethe brought it to Weimar, and by this means it had fallen into my hands. Undoubtedly it is the earliest known poem of his. The subject was the "Descent of Christ into Hell;" and it was remarkable to observe the readiness of the young composer with his religious images. The design of the poem might have suited Klopstock; but its execution was wholly unlike any thing of his. It was stronger, freer, more graceful, had greater energy and better arrangement. The glowing style recalled his youth, full of impetuosity and power. It was longer than the material warranted.

As soon as Goethe saw the yellow, worn-out paper, he remembered his poem. "Perhaps," said he, "Fraulein von Klettenberg induced me to write it, for I see by the heading that it was written by request, and I know not any other friend likely to have given me such a subject. I was very poor in materials then, and was rejoiced when I could get any thing fit to

sing. A day or two ago, a poem of that period came before my eye, which I wrote in the English language, in which I complained of the dearth of poetic subjects. We Germans are ill off in that respect; our old national poems lie too remote, and the later want general interest, because we have no general government. Klopstock tried Arminius, but all that lies too far off; nobody feels any connection with it, or knows what he shall do with it. Accordingly, Klopstock's work has never been popular, or produced any valuable results. I made a happy hit with my *Goetz von Berlichingen;* that was bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and writing it was delightful.

"For *Werther* and *Faust* I was obliged to draw upon my own bosom; I found but a small part ready to my hand. I made but once devils and witches, and I was glad when I had consumed my northern inheritance, and turned to the tables of the Greeks. Had I earlier known how many excellent things have been in existence, for hundreds and thousands of years, I should have written no line; I should have had enough else to do."

26th March, 1826.

Goethe was in one of his pleasantest moods. He had received something he highly valued, Lord Byron's manuscript of the dedication to his "Sardanapalus." He showed it to us after dinner, at the same time teasing his daughter to give him back Byron's letter from Genoa. "You see, my dear child," said he, "I have now every thing collected which relates to my connection with Byron; and now I am enriched with

this valuable paper, nothing is wanting but that letter." But the lovely admirer of Byron would not be persuaded to restore the letter. "You gave it to me once, my father," said she, "and I shall not part with it; and if you wish, as is fit, that like should be with like, you had better give me the other manuscripts, and I will keep them together." This Goethe positively refused, and they continued the playful contention for some time.

After he had risen from table, and the ladies had gone out, Goethe brought from his work-room a red portfolio, which he took to the window, and showed me its contents. "Here," said he, "I have every thing together which relates to my connection with Lord Byron. Here is his letter from Leghorn; here a copy of his dedication, my own poem, and what I wrote for 'Medwin's Conversations;' now, I only need the letter from Genoa, and she will not let me have it."

Goethe had been interested to-day more particularly about Byron by a letter from England. His mind was just now full of him, and he said a thousand interesting things about his works, and the character of his genius.

"The English," said he, among other things, "may think of Byron as they please; they certainly have no poet like him. He is different from the others, and, in many respects, greater."

Monday, 15th May.

He talked about St. Schutze, and he spoke of him with much partiality. "When I was ill a few weeks

since," said he, "I took great pleasure in reading his *Heiteren Stunden*. If Schutze had lived in England, he would have made an epoch; his gift both of observing and depicting was so distinguished, that he needed nothing but the sight of life on a larger scale."

Thursday, 1st June.

Goethe spoke of the "Globe." "The contributors," said he, "are men of the world, cheerful, clear in their views, bold to the last degree. They find fault in the most polished manner; — very unlike our German literati, who always think they must hate those who differ from them in opinion. I consider the 'Globe' as one of our most interesting periodicals, and, indeed, could not do without it."

Wednesday, 26th July.

This evening, I had the pleasure of hearing Goethe talk at length about the theatre.

I told him that one of my friends intended to prepare for the stage Lord Byron's "Two Foscari." Goethe doubted his success.

"He makes a common mistake," he said. "When a piece produces a deep impression on us in reading, we think it will do the same on the stage; but, in reality, no piece that is not originally, by the intent and discretion of the poet, written for acting, ever succeeds on the stage. I have given myself infinite trouble with my *Goetz von Berlichingen*, yet it never will be fit for acting. In fact, it is too long, and I ought to divide it into two parts, regarding the first

as an introduction merely. The first part should be given once only, as an introduction to the other, and then the second could be played repeatedly. 'Tis the same with *Wallenstein;* 'The Picolomini' does not bear repetition, but 'Wallenstein's Death' was always seen with delight."

I asked what was most requisite to make a piece fit for the theatre.

"It must be symbolical," replied Goethe; "that is to say, that each incident must be significant by itself, and yet lead naturally to something more important. The *Tartuffe* of Molière is, in this respect, a great example. What an admirable exposition the first scene gives at the very beginning! and every thing is significant, yet leads us to expect something still more important which is to come. The beginning of Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm* is also admirable; but there is nothing like the *Tartuffe*.

"You find the same perfect adaptation to the theatre in Calderon. His pieces are throughout fit for the boards. Calderon combined with his genius the finest understanding."

"'Tis singular," said I, "that the dramas of Shakspeare are not better adapted to the theatre, since he wrote them all for the stage."

"Shakspeare," replied Goethe, "wrote those pieces direct from his own nature. In his time, there was nothing in stage arrangements to constrain him. Do what he chose, he need not fear to displease; but, if Shakspeare had written for the Court of Madrid, or for that of Louis XIV., he would probably have adapted himself to a severer theatrical form. We

need not regret that he did not, for what he has lost as a dramatist, he has gained as a poet; he is a great pschychologist; from him we learn the mind of man."

We then talked of the difficulties in managing a theatre. Goethe said the chief was to keep the repertory full of good tragedies, operas, and comedies, in proper acting order, and at the same time to make proper use of occasions to introduce novelties. He observed that we are now so rich in good pieces, that the connoisseur may easily make an excellent selection; but it is very difficult to keep them in a state of readiness for the stage.

"When Schiller and I had the care of the theatre, we had the great advantage of keeping it open during summer in Lauchstedt. Here we had a select audience, who liked nothing that was not good; so we returned in autumn, well versed in the best plays, and used again, in the winter, the preparations we had made in the summer; and the Weimar public had such confidence in our judgment that, even if they did not fully appreciate what they saw, they had confidence there was something valuable in it, or we should not have presented it to them.

"In the year ninety," continued Goethe, "the period of my interest in the theatre was already gone by; my mind was entirely turned from the drama to epic poetry; but Schiller revived my interest, and for love of him I again paid some attention to the theatre. At the time when I wrote 'Clavigo,' I could easily have followed it up with a dozen such pieces. I had plenty of subjects, and production was easy to me.

I might have written a piece every eight days, and I am sorry I did not."

Wednesday, 8th November.

Goethe spoke again of Lord Byron. "I have," said he, "just read once more his 'Deformed Transformed,' and admire his genius more than ever. His demon was suggested by Mephistophiles. It is, however, no imitation, but a new and original creation of great merit. There are no weak passages, not a place where you could put the head of a pin, where you do not find invention and thought. But for his hypochondriacal negative turn, he would have been as great as Shakspeare — as the ancients." I expressed surprise at such an assertion.

"You may believe me," said Goethe, "the more I study him, the more I think so."

Some time ago, Goethe had remarked that Byron had too much empiricism. I did not understand exactly what he meant; but I forbore to ask, and thought of it in silence. However, I got nothing by thinking of it, and found that I must wait till my improved culture, or some happy circumstance, should unlock the secret for me. Such a one I found to-day, when I had seen at the theatre an excellent representation of "Macbeth," and afterwards took up Byron to read his "Beppo." By comparing the impression received from this poem with that which Macbeth had left upon my mind, I learned to conjecture. In "Macbeth," a spirit had impressed me, whose grandeur and sublimity could have been created only by a Shakspeare. You saw there the

natural dower of a high and deep nature. Whatever this piece has of knowledge of the world or experience, is quite subordinate to its poetic spirit, and serves only to assist interpretation. The great poet rules and raises us, even to his own point of view.

In "Beppo," on the contrary, I found the empiric uppermost, too powerful even over the mind which introduces it to us. I found not here, as in "Macbeth," the great and genuine thoughts of a highly-gifted poet. The influence of the world was every where apparent. He seemed to be on the same level with all intellectual men of the world, who have the advantage of high rank, and is in no way distinguished above them, except by the superiority of talent, which makes him their mouth-piece.

So I felt, in reading "Beppo," that Lord Byron had too much empiricism, not because he brought real life too much before us, but because his higher poetic nature is often subordinated or even silenced.

Wednesday, November 29, 1826.

I had just been reading Lord Byron's "Deformed Transformed," and talked with Goethe about it after dinner. "The first scenes," said he, "are full of poetry; the remainder, about the siege of Rome, and the rest, are not poetical, yet full of significance." "It is not difficult," said I, "to be so epigrammatic when one, like him, respects nothing."

He smiled. "You are not wrong," said he. "We must confess the poet oversteps the limits of decorum. He tells us truths, but truths so disagreeable, that we should love him better if he held his peace. There

are things in this world, which the true poet rather conceals than discloses; but as to Byron, you might as well wish to annihilate him as wish him other than he is; so decided is his character."

"Do you remember," said I, "the passage,

'The devil speaks truth much oftener than 'tis deemed;
He hath an ignorant audience?'

"That is as good as one of Mephistophiles' sayings."

"Since we are talking of Mephistophiles," continued Goethe, "I will show you something which Coudray brought me from Paris." And he brought in an engraving, representing the scene where Faust and Mephistophiles, on their way to free Margaret from her imprisonment, are rushing by the gallows on two horses. Faust rides a black horse, which gallops wildly on, and seems as much afraid of the ghost beneath the gallows as his rider. They ride so fast that Faust can scarcely keep his seat. The current of air which he raises has blown off his hat, which, fastened by straps about his neck, flies behind him. His fearful, inquiring face is turned to Mephistophiles, to whose words he is listening. Mephistophiles, on the contrary, rides on in tranquillity, untroubled and unassailed, like a being of a higher nature. He rides no living horse, for he loves not what is living; indeed, he does not need it, for his will is sufficient to move him wherever he pleases. He has a horse merely to save appearances; he seems to have snatched up the first skeleton he could find. It is white, and shines in the

darkness of night with phosphoric brilliancy; it is neither bridled nor saddled, yet runs fleetly. The supernatural rider sits negligently, his face turned towards Faust, as if in conversation. The opposing element of air is for him as if it were not; neither he nor his horse shows any trace of it."

I expressed much pleasure in this composition. "Indeed," said Goethe, "I myself did not think it out so perfectly. Now look at this other."

The wild scene of Auerbach's cellar is represented in the other, at the moment when the wine sparkles up into flames, and those present show their intoxication in various ways. All is passion and motion; Mephistophiles alone maintains his usual composure. He cares not for the wild cursing and screaming, and the drawn knife of the man who stands next him moves him not a whit. He sits on the corner of the table, dangling his legs. His upraised finger is enough to subdue flame and passion.

The more you looked at this fine design, the more admirable seemed the art; for no figure resembled another, and each one expressed some essential part of the action.

"Delacroix," said Goethe, "is a man of distinguished genius, who found in 'Faust' the very aliment his mind needed. The wildness for which his countrymen blame him stands him in stead here. I hope he will illustrate all 'Faust,' and I anticipate a special pleasure from the scenes in the witches' kitchen and on the Brocken. You see here the extensive experience of life, for which a city like Paris has given him such opportunity."

I observed that these designs greatly assist the comprehension of a poem.

"Undoubtedly," said Goethe; "for the more perfect conception of such an artist constrains us to find as many beauties in the subject as he did. And, if I must confess, Delacroix has, in many instances, surpassed my own idea of the scenes which I myself originated. Surely, then, the mere reader may find his imagination quickened by their aid."

Monday, 11th December.

I found Goethe in an animated and happy mood. "Alexander von Humboldt has passed some hours with me this morning," said he, coming to meet me with great vivacity; "what a man he is! Long as I have known him, he is continually astonishing me anew. I may say he has not his equal in knowledge, in living wisdom; and such many-sidedness I have found no where else. Wherever you call upon him, you find him at home, every where ready to lavish upon you the intellectual treasures he has amassed. He is like a fountain with many pipes; you need only to get a vessel to hold under it, on any side refreshing streams flow at a mere touch. He is to stay some days; and I shall feel, when he goes away, as if I had lived years during his visit."

Wednesday, 13th December.

At table, the ladies praised a portrait by a young painter. "What is most surprising," said they, "he has learned every thing by himself." You could see that, indeed, by the hands, which are not in correct

drawing. "This young man," said Goethe, "has talent; but you should not praise, but rather scold him, for learning every thing by himself. Let no man of talent rely on his natural resources, but devote himself to art, and seek out good masters, who will show him what to do with what he has. I have, to-day, read a letter from Mozart, where he, in reply to a Baron who had sent him his composition, wrote as follows: —

"'I must scold you *Dilettanti* for two faults, which I usually find among you; either you have no thoughts of your own, and take up with those of others, or, if you have thoughts of your own, you never find out what to do with them.'

"Is not this admirable (*himmlisch*)? and does not this fine remark, which Mozart makes about music, apply to all the other arts?

"Leonardo da Vinci said, 'If your son knows not how to bring out his drawings by deep shades, so round that one can take hold of the forms with his hands, he has no talent;' and further says Leonardo, 'After your son has become perfectly acquainted with perspective and anatomy, put him to a good master.' And now-a-days our young artists scarce understand either when they leave their masters, so are times changed.

"But, indeed, our young painters are every way deficient. Their creations say nothing and do nothing. They paint swords that cannot pierce, and darts that cannot hit; and I often feel as if the soul of things were quite vanished out of the world."

"And yet," said I, "we might expect that the great events of the late wars would have called forth talent."

"They called forth," replied Goethe, "more eagerness than talent, and more talent for politics than for art, and all *naïveté* and fulness of meaning is more than ever wanting; yet how will a painter, destitute of these attributes, produce any thing which can bestow a genuine joy?"

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"I have now," continued Goethe, "been observing painting in Germany for fifty years or more, and not merely observed, but lent a hand also, so that I am not rash in saying that little is to be expected in that quarter, unless, indeed, a great genius should come, which can appropriate all which has been done so far, and make it the means of far higher excellence. The means are all here, and the way marked out. Have we not even the works of Phidias before our eyes? — a piece of good fortune, of which, in youth, I could not so much as dream. Perhaps the great genius that we need so much, is now in the cradle, and you may live to see its glory."

Wednesday, 3d January, 1827.

At dinner, we talked over Canning's excellent speech upon Portuguese affairs. "Some people," said Goethe, "call this speech a blunder; but these are people who know not what they want, unless it be to cabal against all greatness. They are like the Frondeurs; they must have something great, that they may hate it. In Napoleon's time, they were never at a loss; after his fall, they assailed the Holy Alliance, than which nothing greater or more beneficial to mankind ever existed. Now it is

Canning's turn. His speech upon Portugal was dictated by a grand consciousness of the extent of his power and the dignity of his position; and he is in the right to speak as he feels. The Sans Culottes cannot understand this; and what to us seems sublime, is mere stupidity in their eyes. The grand disturbs them; they are not so constituted as to understand, and cannot endure it."

Thursday evening, 4th January.

Goethe praised highly the poems of Victor Hugo. "He is," said he, "a man of decided genius, on whom German literature has had an influence. His poetic youth has, unfortunately, been disturbed by the pedantry of the classic school; but now he has the 'Globe' on his side, and has won the game. I am inclined to compare him with Manzoni. He has much objectivity, and seems to me quite as important a personage as De la Martine and De la Vigne. On close survey, I see the source of this and other fresh talent. Chateaubriand, who is really distinguished for his rhetorical and poetical talents, was their founder. That you may see how Victor Hugo writes, read now this poem upon Napoleon — *Les deux Isles*."

He gave me the book, and went to the stove. I read the poem. "Has he not fine images," said Goethe, "and has not he managed the subject with great freedom of spirit?" He came back to me. "Only see how fine is this passage." He read that of the storm-cloud, from which the lightning darts upward against the hero. "That is fine; the image is correct: among the mountains we often have the

storm beneath us, and may be supposed to see the lightning dart upwards."

"I praise the French," said I, "for never deserting the firm ground of reality. We can translate their poems into prose, without losing any of the substance."

"That," said Goethe, "is because the French poets have real knowledge, while our German simpletons fancy they shall injure their talent, if they labor for the knowledge which is, in fact, necessary nourishment to talent. But let them pass; we can do them no good, and real talent will find its way. Many young poets, who are now before the public, have no real talent, but have been excited to vain attempts by the high state of literature in this country.

"That the French have passed from their former pedantry into this free manner, is not surprising. Diderot, and minds like his, sought to break open this path. The revolution and the reign of Napoleon both favored this; for, if those warlike days were refreshing to the interests of poetry, and allowed no fair play to the Muses, yet they fashioned a multitude of intellects to freedom, who now, in times of peace, can meditate and produce."

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The conversation turned upon painting, and on the mistakes of the school who so superstitiously worship antiquity, (*alterthümelnden Schule.*) "You do not consider yourself a connoisseur," said Goethe; "but I will show you a picture, painted, too, by one of the best living German artists, where you will perceive, at a glance, glaring offences against the primary rules

of art. You will be pleased with parts, dissatisfied with the picture as a whole, and will not know what to make of it; not because he has not talent, but because his judgment, which should have directed that talent, is completely darkened, like that of all these bigots to antiquity; so that he ignores the perfect masters, and takes pattern from their imperfect predecessors.

"Raphael and his contemporaries broke through the limitations of mannerism, to nature and freedom. And now, our artists, instead of being thankful, and using these advantages to proceed on the good way, wish to return to the limitations.

"It is hard to understand this provoking obscuration of their intellects; and, since art will not sustain them in this course, they seek support from religion and party spirit; if they did not, they could not uphold themselves in such weakness.

"There is, through all art, a filiation. If you see a great master, you will find that he has built up his greatness upon the achievements of his predecessors. Men like Raphael grow not from the ground. They take root in the antique, and the best which has been done before them. Had they not used the advantages of their time, little would have been said of them in ours."

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Sunday evening, 12th January.

Goethe had a small musical party. The performers were the Eberwein family, and some members of the orchestra. Among the few hearers were General

Superintendent Röhr, Hofrath Vogel, and some ladies. At Goethe's request, they performed a quartette, by a celebrated young composer. Karl Eberwein, a boy twelve years old, played the piano entirely to Goethe's satisfaction, — indeed, admirably, — and all the parts were well performed.

"'Tis strange," said Goethe, "this state to which the great improvements in the technical and mechanical part have brought our late composers. Their productions are no longer music; they go quite beyond the level of human feelings, and the mind and heart answer no more. How do *you* feel? For my part, I hear with my ears only."

I replied that I fared no better.

"Yet that Allegro," said he, "had character; that whirling and twirling brought before my mind the witches' dance on the Blocksberg."

After we had taken refreshments, Goethe asked Madame Eberwein for some songs. She sang, to Zelter's music, the beautiful song, *Um Mitternacht*, which made the deepest impression.

"That song," said Goethe, "remains beautiful, hear it as often as you will! There is something eternal, indestructible, in that melody!"

The *Erl König* obtained great applause, and the aria, *Ich hab's gesagt der guten Mutter*, made every one say the music suited it so entirely, no one could even have wished it otherwise. Goethe himself was extremely pleased. Some songs from his *Divan* were sung with equal success.

After our friends had gone, I staid for a moment, and he said — "I observe that those songs from the

Divan are quite gone by for me. The Oriental and impassioned elements have died out; or, rather, I have left them behind, as the snake leaves on his path the old skin he has cast by. *Um Mitternacht*, on the contrary, is a part of me, and will live with me while I live.

"Oftentimes, my old productions seem wholly strange to me. To-day, I read a passage in French, and thought — 'This man speaks discreetly enough — thou mightst thyself have said the same' — when, lo, I find it is a passage translated from my own writings!"

Monday evening, January 15th.

After the completion of "Helena," Goethe had employed the latter days of the summer upon the *Wanderjahre*. He often talked to me about the progress of this work.

"In order the better to make use of the materials I possess," said he to me one day, "I have taken the first part entirely to pieces, and intend, by mingling the old with the new, to make two parts. I have had what is printed copied. The places where I have new matter to introduce are marked, and when my secretary comes to such a place, I dictate what is wanting, and thus compel myself never to let my work stop."

Another day he said to me, "All that was formerly printed of the *Wanderjahre* is now completely copied. I have had blue paper put where I am to introduce new matter, so that I always have before my eyes what is yet to do. As I go on at present, these blue spots

vanish very fast, and I take great pleasure in seeing it."

Some weeks since, I had heard from his secretary that he was at work on a new novel. I therefore abstained from evening visits, and satisfied myself with seeing him once a week at dinner. This evening, he showed me the first sheets of his novel. It was that of the death of the tiger, and the charming of the lion by a little boy.

While reading, I admired the extraordinary clearness with which all objects, even the very smallest locality, were brought before our eyes. Their going out to hunt, the old ruins of the castle, the fair, the way through the fields to the ruins, were all made manifest to the eye, in a style so distinct and masterly, that you could never look forward to what was coming, even by a single line.

"Your excellency," said I, "must have had a very decided plan for this work."

"Yes, indeed," replied Goethe, "I have had it in my head for about thirty years; but, at first, as in 'Hermann and Dorothea,' I meant to treat the subject in an epic form, and in hexameters; but, when I now wished to take up the subject again, I could not find my old plan, and was led to manage it in a wholly new manner. Since I finished, I find the old plan; but I am glad I did not earlier. It would only have confused me; the present is better."

"That is a beautiful situation," said I, "in which Honorio stands over the dead tiger, at the moment when the lamenting woman with her boy has just come

up, and the prince too, with his retinue of huntsmen, is hastening to join this singular group; it would make a fine picture. I should like to see it painted."

"Yes," said Goethe, "that would be a fine picture. Yet, perhaps," continued he, after some reflection, "the subject is almost too rich, and the figures are too many; it would be difficult for the artist to group them, and distribute lights and shades to advantage. That earlier moment, in which Honorio kneels on the tiger, and the princess is opposite to him on horseback, has seemed a picture in my mind, and that might be done."

I remarked that this novel was very unlike in character to those of the *Wanderjahre*, as all its merits lay in representation of the outward world.

"Yes," said Goethe, "there is scarce any thing of the inward world here; in my other things there is almost too much."

We talked of the second part of "Faust," especially of the classical Walpurgis night, which existed as yet only in plan, and which Goethe had said to me that he meant to publish as a separate sketch. I now advised him not to do so; for I thought, if he did, he would always leave it in this unfinished state. He seemed to have thought better of it himself, and decided that he would not print it so.

"Now, then," said I, "I shall hope to see it completed."

"It might be done in three months," said he, "could I but have peace for it. Each day has too many claims on me; it is very difficult to isolate myself sufficiently. This morning, the hereditary Grand Duke was here;

to-morrow noon, the Grand Duchess proposes visiting me. Certainly, such visits are a high favor, and embellish my life; but they are a tax upon my mind. I am obliged to bethink myself what I have new, wherewith worthily to entertain such dignified personages."

"Yet," said I, "you finished 'Helena,' last winter, when you were no less disturbed than now."

"Yes," he replied, "affairs go on, and must go on; but the difficulties are great."

"'Tis well," said I, "that your plan is so completely made out."

"The plan I have, indeed," said Goethe, "but the most difficult part is yet to do; and the execution of parts depends only too much on the favor of circumstances. The classic Walpurgis night must be written in rhymes, and yet the whole must have the air of an antique. 'Tis not easy to find a suitable sort of verse; and then the dialogue!"

"Is not that also in the plan?" said I.

"The *what* is there," he replied, "but not the *how*. Then, only think what is to be said on that mad night! Faust's speech to Proserpine, when he would move her to give him Helena — what a speech should that be, which must move Proserpine herself to tears! All this is not easy to do, and depends almost solely on the mood and strength at the moment of writing."

Wednesday, 17th January.

Lately, during Goethe's indisposition, we have dined in the work-room, which looks out on the garden. To-day, I found the cloth laid in what is called the

Urbino chamber, which I received as a good omen. I found there Goethe and his son: both welcomed me in their *naïve*, affectionate manner, and I observed, by the animation of Goethe's face, that he was in his happiest mood.

Through the open door of the next room, I saw Chancellor von Müller, looking at a large engraving. Goethe said this was a work of the celebrated Parisian Gérard, just sent him by the artist as a present. "Go you in also," added he, "and take a peep before our soup comes."

I saw, written upon the engraving, that the artist sent it to Goethe as a mark of particular esteem. I could not look long, as Frau von Goethe came in, and I was called to table.

"Is not that noble?" said Goethe. "You may study it days and weeks before you can find out all its rich thoughts and various perfections."

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Frau von Goethe animated the conversation with her usual attractive liveliness. Young Goethe joking her about certain arrangements, she would not understand him.

"We must not spoil fair ladies," said Goethe, "they are so ready to break all bounds. Even at Elba, Napoleon was persecuted by milliners' bills; yet was he, in such matters, rather inclined to do too little than too much. One day, at the Tuilleries, a *marchand de modes* offered, in his presence, valuable goods to the Empress. Napoleon showing no disposition to buy any thing, the man gave him to understand that he was not sufficiently complaisant to his wife. Napoleon

answered never a word, but measured him with such a look, that the man hastily packed up his things, and was seen no more."

"Was he consul then?" asked Frau von Goethe.

"More probably Emperor," replied Goethe; "else his look would not have been so formidable. I cannot but laugh when I think how that look pierced through the poor man, who saw himself already beheaded or shot down."

"I wish," said young Goethe, "that I had pictures or engravings of all Napoleon's great deeds, to fill a gallery."

"You could not make a gallery large enough to put the pictures in, of his great deeds."

The Chancellor turned the conversation on Luden's "History of the Germans," and I had reason to admire the dexterity and penetration which young Goethe displayed in excusing all which the reviewers had found to blame in the book by the influence of the national views and feelings of the writer's age. It was granted that the wars of Napoleon had explained to us those of Cæsar. "For before," said Goethe, "Cæsar's book was really not much better than an exercise for the schools."

From the old German time, the conversation turned upon the Gothic. We spoke of a bookcase which had a Gothic character, and from this were led to discuss the late fashion of arranging entire apartments in the old German or Gothic style, and thus living under the influences of early days.

"In a house," said Goethe, "large enough to allow of some apartments being thus furnished and used

only three or four times a year, such a fancy might be in place. I would no more object to its owner's having a Gothic, than to Madame Pankoucke at Paris having a Chinese apartment. But I cannot praise the man who dresses out the rooms in which he lives in this strange, old-fashioned garniture. It is a sort of masquerade, which can, in the long run, have no favorable influence on the man who adopts it. Such a fashion is in contradiction to the day in which we live, and can only serve to confirm the empty and hollow way of thinking and feeling in which it originated. It is well enough, on a merry winter's evening, to go to a masquerade in the dress of a Turk; but what should we think of the man who wore such a one all the year round? Either that he was crazy, or in a fair way to become so."

We found Goethe's words very convincing, and as, the reproof touched none of us, received the truth with the pleasantest feelings.

The conversation now turning upon the theatre, Goethe rallied me for having, last Monday evening, sacrificed it to him. "Three years he has lived here," said he, turning to the others, "and this is the first evening he has given up the theatre for love of me. I ought to think a great deal of it. I had invited him, and he had promised to come, yet I doubted whether he would keep his word, especially as it struck half past seven before I saw any thing of him. Indeed, I should have rejoiced if he had not come at all; for then I could have said he is a wholly perverse, wrong-headed man, who loves the theatre better than his dearest friend, and whom nothing can turn aside from his obstinate partial-

ity. But did I not make it up to you? have I not shown you fine things?" These words alluded to the new novel.

We talked of Schiller's "Fiesco," which was acted last Saturday. "I saw it for the first time," said I, "and have been thinking whether those extremely rough scenes could not be softened; but I find very little could be done without spoiling the character of the whole."

"Yes, that can never be done," replied Goethe. "Schiller often talked with me about the possibility of doing it; for he himself could not endure his first plays, and would never have them brought on the stage while we had the direction; but we were in want of pieces, and would willingly have fitted those three powerful firstlings for our purpose. But we found it impossible; all the parts were too closely inwrought one with another; so that Schiller himself despaired of accomplishing it."

"'Tis pity," said I; "for, notwithstanding all their roughness, I love them a thousand times better than the soft, weak, forced, and unnatural pieces of later writers. A sublime intellect and character is felt in every thing of Schiller's."

"Yes," said Goethe, "Schiller might do what he would, he could not make any thing which would not come out far greater than the best of these playwrights. If he only cut his nails, he showed his superiority to these gentlemen." We laughed at this remark.

"But I have known persons," continued he, "who could not be at peace about those first dramas of Schiller.

"One summer, at a bathing place, I was walking through a very secluded, narrow path, which led to a mill.

There Prince —— met me, and, as, at the same momen , some mules, laden with meal sacks, came up to us, we were obliged to step into a small house that stood by the way. Here, as is the fashion of this prince, we were immediately plunged into discourse about all divine and human things, and, Schiller's 'Robbers' being mentioned, the prince expressed himself thus: —

"'Had I been God,' said he, 'on the point of making this world, and could have foreseen at that moment that Schiller's "Robbers" would be written in it, I would not have made the world.' What say you .to that? Here was a distaste which went pretty far, and could hardly be explained."

"The younger people," said I, "and especially the students, would scarcely sympathize with him. The most excellent, ripest pieces of Schiller and others may be acted, and draw few young people, or none, at the theatre; but let them give Schiller's 'Robbers,' or 'Fiesco,' and the house would be filled by students alone.

"That," said Goethe, "was so fifty years ago, as it is now, and probably will be fifty years hence. Young people will best enjoy what a man has written in his youth: nor need we think that the world makes such progress in culture or good taste that youth itself has got beyond that era of rudeness. If the world does improve on the whole, yet youth must always begin anew, and go through the stages of culture from the beginning. This no longer irritates me."

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After some conversation about a novel which Goethe had lately been writing, he said, "I am glad you like it. Schiller and Humboldt, to whom I detailed the plan,

could see no promise in it, as indeed they could not appreciate the capabilities of such a subject. The poet alone knows what charms he is capable of giving to his subject. It is best never to ask any body if you wish to write any thing. If Schiller had asked me about his 'Wallenstein,' I should surely have advised him against it; for I could never have dreamed that, from such a subject, so admirable a drama could be made. Schiller was equally opposed to my using hexameters. He advised me to take eight-line stanza for my 'Hermann and Dorotheà;' yet he was wrong, for such rhymes would have constrained me in that careful delineation of the localities on which so much depends."

Other single tales and novels of the *Wanderjahre* were talked of; and it was observed that each had distinct character and tone. "That," said Goethe, "is because I went to work like a painter who for certain subjects shuns certain colors, and puts upon his palette such as he is likely to want. If he has in hand a morning landscape, he rubs a great deal of blue, and but little yellow. But, if he is to paint an evening scene, he has a great deal of yellow, and scarce any blue. I prepared in the same way for my different productions."

I expressed admiration at the fidelity in details of scenery.

"I have," said Goethe, "never observed Nature with a view to my poetical productions; but, because my early drawing of landscapes, and my studies in after years, led me to constant, close observation of natural objects, I have gradually learned Nature by heart even in the minutest details, so that, when I, as a poet, need

any thing, it is at my command; and I cannot easily sin against truth in my descriptions. Schiller had no such knowledge of Nature. The localities of Switzerland, which he used in 'William Tell,' were all related to him by me; but his wonderful intellect could make such second-hand views look like reality."

"But his proper productive talent lay in the ideal; and there it may be said he has scarcely his equal in German or other literatures. He has almost every thing that Lord Byron had; but Lord Byron was superior in knowledge of the world. I wish Schiller had known Lord Byron's works. I wonder what he would have said to so congenial a mind."

"Did Byron publish any thing during Schiller's life?"

I could not say with certainty. Goethe took down the "Conversations Lexicon," and read the article on Byron, making many hasty remarks as he did so. He found that Byron had published nothing before 1807, and thus that Schiller could have seen nothing of his.

"Through all Schiller's works," continued Goethe, "goes the idea of freedom, though this idea assumed a new shape as Schiller advanced in his culture and became another man.

"In his youth it was physical, in his later life it was ideal freedom, that engaged his thoughts. Now, every man has freedom enough, if he could only satisfy himself, and knew what he is fit for. What avails us a superfluity of freedom which we cannot use? You see this chamber, and the next, in which you, through the open door, see my bed. Neither of them is large; and they are by necessary furniture, books, manuscripts,

and works of art, made narrower; but they are enough for me. I have lived in them all winter, scarce entering my other rooms. Of what use has been my spacious house, and the liberty of going from one room to another?"

"If a man has freedom enough to live healthy, and work at his craft, he has enough; and each man can easily obtain this amount of freedom. Then none of us are free, except under certain conditions, which we must fulfil. The citizen is as free as the nobleman, if he will but restrain himself within the limits which God appointed by placing him in that rank. The nobleman is as free as the prince; for, if he will but observe a few ceremonies at court, he may feel himself his equal Freedom consists not in refusing to recognize any thing above us, but in knowing how to respect what is above us; for, by respecting it, we raise ourselves to it, and make manifest that we bear within ourselves the idea of what is higher, and are worthy to be on a level with it.

"I have on my journeys met merchants from the north of Germany, who fancied they showed themselves my equals by rudely seating themselves next me at table. That was not the way; but they might have become so, if they had known how to value and treat me properly.

"The eager interest of Schiller's youthful years in physical freedom was caused partly by the structure of his mind, but still more from the stern control which he endured at the military school. In later days, when he had enough of this kind of freedom, he passed over to the ideal; and I might almost say that this was the cause of his death, since it led him to make demands

on his physical nature which were too much for his strength.

"The Grand Duke destined for Schiller, when he was established here, an income of one thousand dollars yearly, and offered to give him twice as much in case he should be hindered by sickness from working. Schiller declined this last offer, and never availed himself of it. 'I have talents,' said he, 'and must help myself.' As his family enlarged of late years, he was obliged, for a livelihood, to write two dramas yearly; and to accomplish this, he forced himself to write days and weeks when he was unwell. He would have his talents obedient at all times and seasons. He never drank much; he was very temperate; but, in such hours of bodily weakness, he was obliged to sustain himself by the use of spirituous liquors. This habit not only injured his health, but also his productions: the faults which some wise heads find in his works proceed, I think, from this source. All the passages which they blame may be styled pathological passages; for they were written on those days when he had not strength to do his best. I have great respect for the categorical imperative. I know how much good may proceed from it; nevertheless, this ideal freedom, if carried too far, leads to no good."

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Sunday evening, 21st January.

I went, at half past eight this evening, to Goethe, and staid with him an hour. He showed me some new poems in French, by Mademoiselle Gay, which he highly praised.

"The French," said he, "make out their case so clearly, that it is well worth while to look after them. I have lately been trying to become acquainted with the present state of French literature; and, if I succeed, shall express the result. It is very interesting to observe how the same elements are now at work with them, which we went through with long ago."

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"What says your excellency to Beranger, and the author of 'Clara Gazul?'"

"Those," he replied, "are great geniuses, who have their foundation in themselves, and keep free from the conventional modes of thinking of their time."

"I am glad to hear you say this," said I, "for I have had a similar feeling about them."

The conversation turned from French to German literature. "I will show you something," said Goethe, "that will be interesting to you. Give me one of those two volumes which lie before you. Solger is no doubt known to you."

"Surely," said I, "his translation of Sophocles, no less than his preface, gave me long since a high opinion of him."

"You know he has been dead some years," said Goethe; "and this is a collection of the writings and letters he left. He does not shine in his philosophical inquiries, which he has given us in the form of Platonic dialogues; but his letters are admirable. In one of them, he writes to Tieck upon the *Wahlverwandtschaften*, and I wish to read it to you; for it would not be easy to say any thing better about that romance."

He read me these excellent remarks, and we talked them over point by point, admiring the dignified character of his views, and the logical sequence of his reasoning. Although Solger confessed that the facts of the "Elective Affinities" had their germ in the nature of all characters, yet he blamed that of Edward.

"No wonder," said Goethe, "he cannot endure Edward. I myself cannot endure him, but was obliged to make him such a man in order to bring out my facts. He is, besides, true to nature; you find many such people in the higher ranks, who, like him, substitute selfish obstinacy for character.

"High above all, Solger placed the Architect; because, while all the other persons of the romance show themselves loving and weak, he alone remains strong and free; and the beauty of his character appears in this, that he not only does not share the errors of the other characters, but the poet has made him so noble, that he could not even understand them."

We were much pleased with this remark.

"That is really fine," said Goethe.

"I have," said I, "felt the importance and loveliness of the Architect's character; but I had never remarked that he was by nature incapable of those bewilderments of passion."

"No wonder that you have not remarked it," said Goethe, "for I myself never remarked it while I was creating him; yet Solger is right — such is the basis of his character.

"These remarks," continued he, "were written in the year 1809. I should have been much cheered

to have heard so kind a word about the 'Elective Affinities,' for, at that time, and later, not many pleasant remarks have been vouchsafed me about that romance.

"I see from these letters, that Solger was much attached to me; and, in one of them, he complains that I return no answer about the 'Sophocles' which he sent me. Good Heavens! if they could but know my situation, they would not wonder at that. I have known great lords, to whom many presents were sent, and who had certain formulas and phrases prepared, in which they wrote letters to hundreds, all alike throughout; but I never could do so. If I could not say to each man something distinct and appropriate to the occasion, I preferred not writing to him at all. I esteemed superficial phrases unworthy of my use, and thus have failed to answer many excellent men to whom I would willingly have written. You see, yourself, how it is with me; how messages and despatches are constantly flowing in upon me from every side; and you must confess it would occupy more than one man's life to answer all these, in ever so careless a way. But I am sorry about Solger; he was an admirable being, and deserved, better than most, a friendly response."

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Goethe told me of a foreigner, who had been writing to him, and talks of translating several of his works.

"'Tis a good man," said Goethe, "but, as to literature, I must rank him with the tribe of mere *Dilettanti*. He does not yet know German at all, and is already

talking of the translations he will make, and of the portraits which he will prefix to them.

"That is always the way with the *Dilettanti*; they have no idea of the difficulties which lie in an undertaking, and are always full of some plan for which they have no faculty."

Thursday evening, 29th January.

At seven o'clock I carried the manuscript of the novel and a copy of Beranger to Goethe. I found him engaged with M. Soret in conversation upon modern French literature. It was observed how much these modern writers had learned of versification from De Lille. Soret, being born a Genevese, does not speak German fluently; and, as Goethe talks French very well, the conversation was carried on in that language, except when I said, now and then, something in German. I gave my "Beranger" to Goethe, who wished to read his admirable chansons again. Soret thought that the portrait, which was prefixed to the poems, was not a good likeness. Goethe was much pleased to have this beautiful copy in his hands.

"These songs," said he, "are perfect, especially when you look at the burden, without which they would be almost too earnest, too intellectual and epigrammatic, for songs. Beranger reminds me ever of Horace and Hafiz, who stood in the same way above their times, satirizing and playing with vices and follies; but, because Beranger himself was born in a low station, the licentious and common are not very hateful to him; indeed, he shows a sort of partiality for them."

Many similar remarks were made upon Beranger, and other French writers of the time, till M. Soret went to Court. I remained alone with Goethe.

A sealed packet lay upon the table. Goethe laid his hand upon it. "This," said he, "is 'Helena,' which I am about to send to Cotta."

I felt, at these words, more than I could say. I felt the importance of the moment; for, as when a newly-built vessel puts to sea, and we feel that we know not what revolutions of destiny it must encounter — so with the creation of a great master, thus going forth into the world to do its work through many times, to produce and to undergo manifold destinies.

"I have," said Goethe, "till now, been always finding little things, which I wished to add or alter; but I must finish now, and I am glad it is going to press, and that I shall be left at liberty to turn my mind to some other object. Let it live out its proper destiny. My comfort is, that the general culture of Germany stands at an incredibly high point; so that I need not fear that such a production should long remain misunderstood and ineffectual."

"There is a whole antiquity in it," said I.

"Yes," said Goethe, "the philologists will find matter for their handling."

"I have no fear," said I, "about the antique part; the detail, the unfolding of individuals, is so thorough; each personage saying just what he should. But the modern romantic part is very difficult; half the history of the world is there; your material is so rich that you can only indicate what is to be said upon it, and the reader's powers are severely taxed."

"Yet," said Goethe, "all has sensuous life, and, on the stage, would satisfy the eye. More I did not wish. If only the crowd of spectators take pleasure in what is obvious, the initiated will detect the higher meaning. Such has been the case with the 'Magic Flute,' and other things of that sort."

"There is no precedent," said I, "in the records of the stage, for beginning a piece as a tragedy, and ending it as an opera."

"The part of Helena," said Goethe, "ought to be played by two great female artists; for we seldom find that a fine vocalist has also the talents of a tragic actress."

"Would we could find a great composer for it!" said I.

"We want one," said Goethe, "who, like Meyerbeer, has lived so long in Italy, that he combines the Italian art and manner with his German nature. Such a one would be hard to find, but I do not trouble myself; I rejoice only that I am rid of it. I congratulate myself that I did not permit the Chorus again to descend into the lower world, but rather dispersed them to the elements on the cheerful surface of the earth."

"That is a new sort of immortality," said I.

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We talked over the title which should be given to his late novel. Many were proposed, but none seemed exactly suitable.

"We will call it 'The Novel,'" said Goethe; "for what is a novel but a peculiar, and as yet unheard of, adventure? This is the proper meaning of this name; and many which in Germany have assumed the title

of novels, are narratives merely. The title is used in its proper sense in the *Wahlverwandtschaften.*"

"If one thinks rightly," said I, "a poem always rises in the mind without a title, and is what it is without a title; so that the name does not belong to the thing."

"It does not belong to it," said Goethe; "the ancient poems had no title; this is a custom of modern times, which also have given titles to ancient poems. Indeed, since the diffusion of knowledge, it has become necessary to give name to every thing, in order to keep literature distinct in the mind."

He showed me a translation of a Servian poem, by M. Gerhard. I read it with great pleasure. The poem was very beautiful, and the translation so simple and clear that the reader was never disturbed in his contemplation of the subject. The poem was called "The Prison Key." I will say nothing here of the narrative, except that the close seemed to me abrupt, and rather dissatisfying.

"That is the best part of it," said Goethe, "since, thereby, a sting is left in the heart, and the reader is excited to image to himself all the possibilities that might follow from what he has heard. The close leaves behind material for a whole tragedy, but of a sort of which we have many. What is represented in the poem, on the contrary, is equally new and beautiful; and the poet is very wise to finish only this part, and leave the rest to the reader. I would willingly insert the poem in *Kunst und Alterthum*, but it is too long; therefore, I have begged these others from Gerhard, which I shall put into the next number."

Goethe read first the song of the old man who loves a young maiden, then the woman's drinking song, and finally that animated one beginning "Dance for us, Theodore." He read them admirably, and each in a peculiar tone and manner. It would not be easy to hear any thing more perfect. "Gerhard," said I, "ought to be praised for having in each instance chosen the most appropriate versification and burden, and has done each in so graceful and masterly a manner that we can conceive of nothing finer." "How much," said Goethe, "has technical practice done for such a genius as Gerhard's; and it is fortunate for him that he has no properly literary profession, but one that daily instructs him in practical life. He has travelled much in England and other countries; and his tendency to observe what is actual has given him, from this circumstance, many advantages over our book-learned young poets.

"If he would confine himself to making good translations, his success would be invariable; but original inventions make much greater demands."

Some reflections being made upon the productions of our young poets, it was remarked that scarce one of them had given us an example of good prose. "That is very natural," said Goethe; "he who would write prose must have something to say; but he who has nothing to say can make verses and rhymes; for one word gives the other, till at last you have before you what in fact is nothing, yet looks as if it were something."

Wednesday, 31st January.

I dined with Goethe. "Since I saw you," said he, "I have read many and various things; among which

a Chinese romance has occupied and interested me most of all."

"Chinese romance!" said I; "that is indeed some thing quite out of the way."

"Not so much as you think," said Goethe; "the Chinamen think, act, and feel almost exactly like us; and we should feel perfect congeniality with them, if all they do were not more clear, more pure and decorous than with us.

"With them all is well contrived, citizen-like, without great passion or poetic flight; in these respects, much resembling my 'Hermann and Dorothea,' as well as the English romances of Richardson. They differ from us in another way. Among them, external nature is always associated with the human figures. You always hear the goldfishes plashing in the pond, and the birds singing on the bough; the day is always serene and sunny, the night always clear. There is much talk about the moon, but its light does not alter the landscape, because it is as clear as that of day itself; and the interior of the houses is as neat and elegant as their pictures. For instance, 'I heard the lovely maidens laughing, and, when I came where they were, I found them sitting on cane chairs.' There a single touch gives you the prettiest situation. Ideas of great elegance and lightness are associated with cane chairs. Then you find an infinite number of legends turned almost like proverbs; as, for instance, of a maiden who was so light and graceful, and her feet so delicate, that she could balance herself on a flower without bending it; and then one of the young men so excellent and brave, that, in his thirtieth year, he had the

honor to talk with the Emperor; then of two lovers who showed great purity during a long acquaintance, and, being on one occasion obliged to pass the night in the same chamber, conversed till morning without ever once approaching one another.

"And innumerable other legends, all turning upon what is moral and proper. 'Tis this severe habit of regulation in every thing which has sustained the Chinese Empire for thousands of years past, and will for thousands to come.

"I find a remarkable contrast to this Chinese romance in the 'Chansons de Beranger,' which have, almost every one, some immoral or licentious subject, and which would be extremely odious to me, if managed by a genius inferior to Beranger. He, however, has made them not only tolerable, but pleasing. Is it not remarkable, that the subjects of the Chinese poets should be so thoroughly moral, and those of the most distinguished French poet of the present day be exactly the contrary?"

"Such a talent as Beranger's," said I, "would find no room in moral subjects."

"You are right," said Goethe; "the very perversions of his time have revealed and developed his better nature."

I asked whether the Chinese romance of which he spoke were one of their best.

"By no means," said Goethe; "the Chinese have thousands of them, and had already, when our forefathers were still living in the woods.

"I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself in

every place, and at all times, in hundreds of men. One makes it a little better than another, and swims upon the tide a little longer than another, — that is all. Matthisson must not think he is all, nor must I think that I am all; but each must say to himself that the gift of poetry is by no means rare, and that nobody need give himself airs because he has written a good poem.

"But, really, we Germans are very likely to make this pedantic mistake, if we do not take heed to look beyond the narrow circle which surrounds us. I therefore gladly make excursions to other countries, and advise every one to do the same. National literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of World literature is at hand, and each one must strive to hasten its approach. But, while we know how to value what is foreign, we must not fix our attention on any thing in particular, as the only pattern and model. We must not think the Chinese are a model, or the Servian, or Calderon, or the Nibelungen. If we want examples, we had best return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of manhood is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at historically, appropriating what is good in them, so far as we can use it."

The bells of passing sledges here allured us to the window, as we expected that the long procession, which went out to Belvidere this morning, would return about this time.

Goethe, meanwhile, continued his instructive conversation. We talked of Alexander Manzoni; and he told me that Count Reinhard, not long since, saw

Manzoni at Paris, where he, as a young author of celebrity, has been well received in society, and that he was now living pleasantly on his estate in the neighborhood of Milan, with a young family and his mother.

"Manzoni," continued he, "wants nothing except to know what a good poet he is, and what rights belong to him as such. He has quite too much respect for history, and is always adding to his pieces notes, to show how faithful he has been to its details; yet, though his facts may be historical, his characters are no more so than my Thoas and Iphigenia. No poet has ever known those historical characters which he has painted; if he had, he could scarcely have made use of them. He knows what effects he wishes to produce, and models his characters accordingly. If I had made Egmont, as in history, the father of a dozen children, his light-minded proceedings would be altogether absurd. I needed an Egmont more in harmony with his own actions and my poetic views; and this is, as Clara says, my Egmont.

"Why should there be poets, if they only repeated the record of the historian. The poet must go further, and give us, if possible, something higher and better. All the characters of Sophocles bear the stamp of that great poet's lofty soul. 'Tis the same in Shakspeare's characters, and right with both. Shakspeare, indeed, makes his Romans Englishmen; and there too he was right; for otherwise his nation would not have understood him.

"Therefore were the Greeks so great, because they

looked less to fidelity to historic facts than to the management of them by the poet. We have a fine example in Philoctetes, which subject has been taken up by all three of the great tragedians, and by Sophocles, the last and best. His drama has, fortunately, come down to us entire, while of those of Eschylus and Euripides, we have only fragments, although sufficient to show how they have managed the subject. If I had but time, I would restore these pieces, as I did the Phaeton of Euripides; it would be to me no unpleasant or useless task.

"The problem of this subject at first seems easy to solve, namely, to bring Philoctetes, with his bow, from the island of Lemnos. In the manner of doing this, the power of poetical invention is to be displayed. Ulysses must fetch him; but shall he be known by Philoctetes or not? and if not, how shall he be disguised? Shall Ulysses go alone, or have companions, and who shall they be? Eschylus gave him no companion; in Euripides, it is Diomed; in Sophocles, the son of Achilles. Then, in what situation are they to find Philoctetes? Shall the island be inhabited or not? and, if inhabited, shall any sympathetic soul have received him or not? And so with a hundred other things, which are all at the discretion of the poet, giving him an opportunity to show superior tact and taste. Let the poet look to this, and he will not need a subject which has never been used before; neither to look to South and North for unheard-of adventures, which are often barbarous enough, and merely impress as

adventures. To give dignity to a simple subject, by a masterly way of treating it, demands intellect and genius, such as we rarely find."

The conversation now turning upon other subjects, Goethe made this remark: — "To purify and to improve, by filling out an invention, is often right and profitable; but to be remarking and carrying further what has once been well made, as Sir Walter Scott, for instance, has done about my Mignon, whom he, besides her other peculiarities, makes deaf and dumb, — this sort of alteration I cannot praise."

Thursday evening, February 1.

Goethe told me about a visit, which the Crown Prince of Prussia had been making him, in company with the Grand Duke. "Also," said he, "the Princes Charles and William of Prussia were with me this morning. The Crown Prince and Grand Duke staid nearly three hours; and we talked about many things, which gave me opportunity to see the intellect, taste, knowledge, and superior way of thinking, of these young princes."

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Speaking of Wolf's theory about Homer, he said — "Wolf has destroyed Homer, but could not injure the poem, which has the miraculous power of the Valhalla heroes, who, if hewn to pieces in the morning, came, sound in body and limb, to the noon-day banquet."

Wednesday, February 4.

Goethe scolded about the critics who cannot be satisfied with Lessing, but make unjust demands upon

him. "When people," said he, "compare the pieces of Lessing with those of the ancients, and call them paltry and miserable, what do they mean? Let them rather pity the extraordinary man who lived in a time too poor to afford him better materials; pity him, because he found nothing better to do than to meddle with Saxon and Prussian transactions in his 'Minna.' His polemical turn, too, was the fault of his time. In 'Emilia Galeotti,' he vents his pique against princes; in 'Nathan,' against priests."

Friday, 16th February.

I told Goethe that I lately had been reading Winckelmann upon the imitation of Greek works of art, and I confessed that it often seemed to me that Winckelmann was not perfectly clear about his subject.

"You are quite right," said Goethe; "we often find him merely groping, yet he never fails to have a valuable object in view. He is like Columbus, when he had not yet discovered the new world, yet bore in his mind a presentiment of its existence. We learn nothing by reading him, but he helps to become something.

"Meyer has gone further, and has carried the knowledge of art to its highest point. His history of art is an immortal work; but he would not have become what he is, if, as a youth, he had not formed himself on Winckelmann, and walked in the path which Winckelmann pointed out.

"Thus you see once again the advantage of having a great predecessor, and the profit of knowing how to avail yourself of his labors."

Wednesday, 11th April.

I went this morning to Goethe about one o'clock, as he had invited me to take a drive with him before dinner. We took the road to Erfurt: the weather was beautiful; the corn-fields on both sides of the way refreshed the eye with the liveliest green. Goethe seemed in his feelings gay and young as the early spring, but in his words old in wisdom.

"I must ever repeat it," he began, "the world could not exist, if it were not so simple. This ground has been tilled a thousand years, yet its powers remain ever the same; a little rain, a little sun, and each spring it grows green again."

He looked some time over the meadows, then, turning again to me, continued thus on other subjects: —

"I have been reading something singular, — the letters of Jacobi and his friends. It is a remarkable book, and you must read it, not to learn any thing from it, but to take a glance into a state of education and literature of which people now have no idea. We see interesting men, but they do not act in the same direction and for common interests; each one takes his own way, without sympathizing at all in the exertions of others; they are like billiard balls, which run blindly by one another on the green cover, and, if they come in contact, it is only to recede so much the farther from one another."

I smiled at this excellent simile. I asked about the persons in question, and Goethe named them to me, with some distinctive remark about each.

"Jacobi was a born diplomatist, a handsome man,

of slender figure, elegant and noble mien, who, as an ambassador, would have been perfectly in his place; as a poet, a philosopher, he had great deficiencies.

"His relation to me was peculiar. He loved me personally, without sympathizing with, or even approving my efforts; only the sentiment of friendship bound us together. But the beauty of my connection with Schiller was, that we found the strongest bond of union in our exertions to reach a common aim, and had no need of what is commonly called friendship."

I asked whether Lessing took part in this correspondence.

"No," said he, "but Herder and Wieland did. Herder, however, did not enjoy such connections; he was too high-minded not to detect their hollowness in the long run. Hamann, too, had a tone of superiority with these people.

"Wieland, as usual, appears in these letters cheerful and at home; caring for no opinion in particular, he was adroit enough to take a part in all. He was like a reed, moved hither and thither by the wind of opinion, yet always adhering firmly to its root.

"My personal relation to Wieland was always very pleasant, especially in those earlier days when he belonged to me alone. His little tales were written at my suggestion; but, when Herder came to Weimar, Wieland was false to me. Herder, whose powers of personal attraction were very great, took him away from me."

We now, turning homeward, saw towards the east many rain-clouds shading one into another.

"These clouds," said I, "threaten to descend as

rain each moment. Do you think they would dissipate if the barometer rose?"

"Yes," said he, "they would be rent and shrivelled at once. So strong is my faith in the barometer, that I maintained, even in the night of the great inundation of Petersburg, had the barometer risen, the waves must have receded.

"You, perhaps, like my son, believe that the moon influences the weather, and I do not blame you; the moon is so important an orb, that we must ascribe to it great influences on our earth; but the change of the weather, the rise and fall of the barometer, are not affected by the changes of the moon; they are purely telluric.

"I think of the earth and her atmosphere as a great living being, always engaged in inspiration and expiration. If she draws in her breath, then draws she the atmosphere to her, so that, coming near her surfaces, it is condensed to clouds and rain. I call this state the affirmation of water, (*Wasser-bejahung.*) Should it continue an unusual length of time, the earth would be drowned; but she expires her breath again, and the watery vapors are pushed up, and so dissipated in the higher atmosphere, that not only the sun can pass through them, but the eternal darkness of infinite space seems a fresh blue. This state of the atmosphere I call the negation of water (*Wasser-verneinung.*) For, as under the contrary influences not only water comes profusely from above, but also the moisture of the earth cannot be dried and dissipated,—so under these not only no moisture comes from above, but that of the earth flies upwards; so that, if this

should continue an unusual length of time, the earth, even if the sun did not shine, would be in danger of completely drying up.

"The thing is very simple, and I abide by what is simple and prevalent, without being disturbed by occasional deviations from the general rule. High barometer, dry weather, east wind; low barometer, wet weather, and west wind; this is the general rule by which I abide. Should wet clouds blow hither, when the barometer is high, and the wind east, or, if we have a clear sky, with a west wind, I do not disturb myself, nor lose my faith in the general rule; but merely observe how many collateral influences are to be allowed for, whose nature we do not yet understand.

"I will tell you something which will be of value to your future life. There is, in nature, an accessible and inaccessible. Be careful to discriminate, with due reverence, betwixt the two. He who cannot make this distinction torments himself, perhaps his life long, about the inaccessible, without ever coming near the truth. It is, indeed, hard to say where the one ends and the other begins. But he who is prudent will labor only on what he considers the accessible; and, while he traverses every part, and confirms himself on all sides of this region, he will win somewhat even from the inaccessible, while he must confess, that only a limited insight is possible, in certain matters, and that nature has ever in reserve, problems, which man has not the faculties capable of solving."

We had returned before the dinner hour, and

Goethe had time to show me a landscape, by Rubens. It represented a summer's evening. On the left of the foreground, you saw field laborers going homewards; in the midst of the picture, a flock of sheep, following their shepherd to the hamlet; a little farther back, on the right, a hay-cart, which people were busy in loading; the horses, not yet put in, were grazing near; afar off, in the meadow and thickets, mares were grazing with their foals, and appearances indicated that they would remain there all night. Several villages and a town bordered the bright horizon of this picture, in which the ideas of activity and repose were combined in the most graceful manner.

The whole seemed to me put together with such truth, and the details painted with such fidelity, that I said, Rubens must have copied the picture from nature.

"By no means," said Goethe, "so perfect a picture is never seen in nature. We are indebted, for its composition, to the poetic mind of the painter; but the great Rubens had such an extraordinary memory, that he carried all nature in his head, and she was always at his command, in the minutest particulars. Thence comes such truth in the whole, and in parts, that we think it must be copy from nature. No such landscapes are painted now-a-days. That way of feeling and seeing nature no longer exists. Our painters are wanting in poetry.

"Then our young geniuses are left to themselves; they want living masters, to initiate them into the mysteries of art. Much may be learned from the

dead; but scarcely an insight into the secrets of their design and mode of execution."

Frau and Herr Von Goethe came in, and we sat down to dinner. We chatted awhile on topics of the day, such as the theatre, balls, and the court; but soon we were led to subjects of more importance, and became deeply engaged in conversation on the religious doctrines of England.

"You ought, like me," said Goethe, "to have been studying church history for fifty years, to have any just notion of this. Observe how the Mohammedans educate a votary. They give their young people, as religious foundation, this doctrine, that nothing can happen to man, except what was long since decreed by an overruling divinity.

"With this they are prepared and satisfied for a whole life, and scarce need any thing further.

"I will not inquire whether this doctrine is true or false, useful or pernicious, only observing that we all, without being taught, share this faith to some degree. 'The ball on which my name is not written, cannot hit me,' says the soldier in the battle-field; and how, without such a belief, could he maintain such courage and gayety, in the most imminent peril? What we are taught in our Christian law, 'No sparrow falls to the ground without the consent of our Father,' comes from the same source, intimating that there is a Providence, which keeps in its eye the smallest things, and without whose will and permission nothing can happen.

"Then the Mahommedans begin their instruction

in philosophy, by affirming that nothing exists, which does not suppose its contrary. Thus they practise the minds of youth in detecting and evolving the opposite of every proposition; from which arises great adroitness in thinking and speaking.

"Truly, from such habits, doubt may arise as to what is truth; but this doubt will only incite the mind to those closer inquiries and experiments, in which alone man can find satisfaction.

"You see that nothing is wanting in this doctrine, and that we, with all our systems, have got no further; and that, generally speaking, no one can get further."

"That the Greeks," said I, "made use of similar modes of instruction in philosophy, is obvious from their tragedy, which rests upon contradiction; as not one of the speakers ever maintains any opinion, without some other arguing, with equal dexterity, for the opposite side."

"You are perfectly right," said Goethe; "and there too is doubt, like that which is awakened in the observer or reader; and destiny alone, connecting itself with the moral side, leads to certainty at last."

We rose from table, and Goethe took me with him into the garden, to continue our conversation.

"It is remarkable," said I, "of Lessing, that he, in his theoretical writings, in the 'Laocoon,' for instance, never leads us directly to a result, but always takes us by the philosophical way of affirmation, counter affirmation, and doubt, before he will let us arrive at a sort of certainty. We are rather occupied by the operation of thinking and seeking, than benefited by great views and great truths, suitable to excite our

own powers of thought, and make our own powers productive."

"Yes," said Goethe; "Lessing himself said, that if God would give him truth, he would decline the gift, and prefer the labor of seeking it for himself.

"That philosophic system of the Mohammedans is a good measure, which we can apply to ourselves and others, to ascertain the degree of spiritual progress which we have attained.

"Lessing, from his polemical nature, loved best the region of doubt and contradiction. Analysis is his province, as there his fine understanding could most aid him.

"You will find me wholly the reverse. I have always avoided contradiction, striven to dispel doubt by inward efforts, and uttered only the results of my mental processes."

I asked Goethe which of the new philosophers he admired most.

"Kant," said he, "stands undoubtedly highest; his doctrines still continue to work, and have penetrated most deeply into our German education. He has done his work on you, although you have never read him; now you need him no longer, for you already possess what he could give you; but if you wish, by and by, to read something of his, I recommend to you his 'Critique on the Power of Judgment," in which he has written admirably upon rhetoric, tolerably upon poetry, but unsatisfactorily on the plastic arts."

"Has your Excellency ever had any personal connection with Kant?"

"No," he replied; "Kant has never taken notice of me; while my nature led me a way not unlike his. I wrote my 'Metamorphoses of Plants,' before I knew any thing about Kant; and yet is it wholly in his spirit. The separation of subject from object, the faith that each creature exists for its own sake, and that cork-trees do not grow, merely that we may have stoppers for our bottles, — this I share with Kant, and I rejoice to meet him on such ground. Afterwards I wrote *Lehre von Versuch*, which is to be regarded as criticism upon subject and object, and medium for both.

"Schiller was wont to advise me against the study of Kant's philosophy. He said Kant could give me nothing; but he himself studied Kant with great zeal; and I, also, studied him, and not without profit."

While talking thus, we had been walking up and down the garden; the clouds had been darkening; it began to rain; and we were obliged to return to the house, where we continued our conversation for some time.

Wednesday, 20th June.

The family table was covered for five; the room was vacant and cool, which was very pleasant in this extreme heat. I went into the spacious room next the dining-hall, where are the worked carpet, and the colossal bust of Juno.

Goethe soon came in, and greeted me in his affectionate and cordial manner: he took a chair, and sat down by the window. "Do you also take a

chair," said he, "and let us have a little chat before the others come in.

"I am glad you have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted here with Count Sternberg. He is now gone, and I have resumed my usual habits of activity and peace."

"The appearance and manners of the Count," said I, "were very imposing, and not less so the extent of his knowledge. Turn the conversation where you would, he was every where at home; always profound, masterly, and comprehensive. He is a remarkable man."

"Yes," said Goethe, "he is a very remarkable man; and his influence and his connections are very extensive in this country. His *Flora Subterranea* has made him known as a botanist through all Europe; and he is not less distinguished as a mineralogist. Do you know his history?"

"No," said I, "but I should be glad to hear any thing about him. I saw in him the nobleman; a man of the world, and, at the same time, of knowledge so various and profound, that I should like to understand how so much was effected."

Then Goethe told me how the count, destined as a youth to the clerical station, began his studies at Rome; but, after Austria had taken back certain favorable promises, went to Naples, and so on. Goethe told me the circumstances of a life sufficiently interesting and important to adorn the *Wanderjahre*, but which I do not feel myself at liberty to repeat here. I greatly enjoyed the narrative, and thanked him with my whole soul.

The conversation now turned upon the Bohemian schools, and their great advantages, especially for a thorough æsthetic culture.

The ladies and young Goethe now came in, and we sat down to table. The conversation was gay and varied, but often turned upon the evangelical people of some cities in Northern Germany. It was remarked that these pietistical separations had destroyed the harmony of whole families.

I said that I could sympathize with such ills, having lost an excellent friend, because he could not convert me to his opinions. He was thoroughly convinced that good works are of no avail, and that man can win favor with the divinity only by the grace of Christ.

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"According to the present course of the world, in conversing on such topics," said Goethe, "all is one puddle; and perhaps none of you know whence it comes — but I will tell you.

"The doctrine of good works, namely, that man, by good actions, and founding beneficent institutions, can avoid the penalty of sin, and win the favor of God, is Catholic. But the reformers, out of opposition, rejected such a doctrine, and declared that man must seek solely to recognize the merits of Christ, and share in his grace, which really must lead to good works. But, now-a-days, all this is mingled together, and nobody knows whence a thing comes."

I was thinking, though I did not freely express it, that various opinions in religious matters had always sown dissension among men, and that, indeed, the first

murder had been introduced by a difference in the mode of worshipping God.

I said that I had just been reading Byron's "Cain," and had been particularly struck by the third act, and the manner in which the catastrophe was produced.

"Is it not admirable?" said Goethe. "Its beauty is such as we shall not see a second time in the world."

"Cain," said I, "was at first under ban in England; but now every body reads it, and young English travellers carry usually a complete Byron with them."

"It was folly," said Goethe, "for, in fact, there is nothing in Cain, which is not taught by the English bishops themselves."

The Chancellor was announced. He sat down with us at table. Goethe's grandchildren, Walter and Wolfgang, came jumping. Wolf pressed close to the Chancellor.

"Bring," said Goethe, "your Album, and show the Chancellor your Princess, and what Count Sternberg wrote for you."

Wolf sprang up and brought the book. The Chancellor looked at the portrait of the Princess, and the verses which had been annexed by Goethe. He looked further in the book, and seeing Zelter's handwriting, read aloud, *Lerne gehorchen*, ("Learn to obey.")

"Those are the only reasonable words in the whole book," said Goethe, laughing; "as, indeed, Zelter is always wise and dignified. I am now looking over his letters with Riemer; and they contain invaluable

matter. Especially are the letters which he has written me on his journeys, of great worth; for he has, as a skilful architect and musician, the advantage, that he can never want interesting subjects for criticism. So soon as he enters a city, the buildings stand before him, and tell him all their merits and all their faults.

"The musical societies receive him at once, and show to the master's practised eye their virtues and defects. If a short-hand writer could but have recorded his conversations with his musical scholars, we should possess something truly unique in its way. In such matters is Zelter great, and hits always the nail on the head."

Thursday, July 5.

Towards evening, I met Goethe in the Park, returning from a ride. As he passed he beckoned to me to come and see him. I went immediately to his house, where I found Coudray; and the Chancellor came in presently. The conversation turned on political subjects — Wellington's embassy to St. Petersburg, and its probable consequence, Capo d'Istria, &c.

We talked, too, of Napoleon's times. Coudray showed us a drawing of the iron railing with which he intends to surround Wieland's grave at Osmannstedt.

After the Chancellor and Coudray were gone, Goethe asked me to stay with him awhile. "For one who, like me, lived in two ages," said he, "there is an oddity in this talk about statues and monuments. When one is erected in honor of any distinguished man, I seem already to see it cast down and trampled upon by the warriors of future days. Already I see

Coudray's iron railing about Wieland's grave, shoeing the horses of future cavalry. Indeed, I may say that I have lived through a similar change in Frankfort. Wieland's grave is much too near the Ilm; the stream in a hundred years will have so worn the shore by its sudden turn, that it will have reached the body."

We had some good-humored jests about the terrible inconstancy of earthly things, and then, looking upon Coudray's drawing, were led to praise the fine English pencil, so well adapted both to the delicate and strong strokes, that the thought is conveyed immediately to the paper, without the least loss. Goethe showed me a fine drawing, by an Italian master, of the boy Jesus with the doctors; then he showed me an engraving from a picture on this subject.

"I have lately been so fortunate," said he, "as to buy many excellent drawings by celebrated masters, at a reasonable rate. Such drawings are invaluable; not only because they give, in its purity, the spiritual intention of the artist, but because they enable us to enter into the mood of his mind, in the hour of creation. From this drawing of the boy Jesus, and the temple, we perceive the great clearness, and still, serene resolution, in the mind of the artist. The arts of painting and sculpture have the great advantage that they are objective, and attract us, without violently exciting our feelings. Such a work either speaks to us not at all, or in a very decided manner; a poem makes a far more vague impression, exciting in each hearer different emotions, according to his age and capacity."

"I have," said I, "been reading, of late, the

excellent romance of 'Roderick Random,' by Smollett. It gave me almost the same impression with a good drawing. It is a direct representation of the subject, with no touch of the sentimental; the reality of life stands before us as it is, often repulsive and detestable enough, yet, when made into a whole, giving a pleasant impression on account of the decided reality."

"I have often heard the praises of 'Roderick Random,' and can well believe what you say of it, but have never read it. I should like to have you read Johnson's 'Rasselas,' and tell me what you think of it."

I promised to do so.

"In Lord Byron," said I, "especially in 'Don Juan,' I find passages describing objects merely, and giving the same feeling with a good drawing."

"Yes," said Goethe, "Lord Byron was great in that; his pictures have an air of careless reality, and are as lightly thrown off as if they were improvised. I know but little of 'Don Juan,' but I remember many such passages from his other poems, especially sea scenes, with a sail peeping out here and there, so full of life, that you seem to feel the sea-breeze blowing."

"In his 'Don Juan,'" said I, "I have particularly admired the representation of London, which his careless verses bring before your eyes. He is not very scrupulous whether his objects are poetical or not; but seizes and uses all just as they come before him; even the wigs in the hair-cutter's window, and the men who take care of the street lamps."

"Our German æsthetics," said Goethe, "are always talking about poetical and unpoetical objects; nor are they from a certain point of view wrong; yet,

at bottom, no object which the poet knows how to use is unpoetical."

I remarked that Byron was very successful in his women.

"Yes," said Goethe, "his women are good. Indeed, this is the only vase into which we moderns can pour our ideality; nothing can be done with the men. Homer has got it all away in Achilles and Ulysses, the bravest and most prudent of possible men."

"I wonder," said I, "that Lord Byron could dwell so long on bodily torture, as he must, to write the 'Two Foscari.'"

"That," said Goethe, "was Byron's element; he was always a self-tormentor. Such subjects were his darling theme, as you see in all his works, scarce one of which has a cheerful subject. The management of this play (the 'Foscari') is worthy of great praise."

"Admirable!" said I; "every word is strong, significant, and subservient to the aim. Indeed, generally speaking, I find no weak lines in Byron. I think ever I see him issuing from the sea, fresh, and full of creative power. The more I read him, the more I admire the greatness of his genius, and think you were quite right to present him with that immortal monument of love in 'Helena.'"

"I could not," said Goethe, "make any man the representative of the modern poetical era except him, who undoubtedly is to be regarded as the greatest genius of our century. He is neither classic nor romantic, but the reflection of our own day. He suited me in every respect, with his unsatisfied nature and his warlike tendency, which led to his death at

Missolonghi. It were neither convenient nor advisable to write a treatise upon Byron; but I shall not omit to pay him honor at proper times."

Goethe spoke further of 'Helena.' "I thought of a very different close," said he, "at one time, but, afterwards, this of Lord Byron pleased me better. You observe the character of the chorus is quite destroyed by this song; until this time, in the antique fashion, it has never belied its girlish nature, but now of a sudden becomes nobly reflecting, and says things such as it never did nor could think."

"Certainly," said I, "I remarked it; but, since I have seen the double shadows of Rubens's landscapes, and got a better insight into the idea of fiction, such things do not disturb me. These little inconsistencies are of no consequence, if they are stepping-stones to a higher beauty; since the song is to be sung, and there is no other chorus to sing it, let the girls do so."

"I wonder," said Goethe, laughing, "what the German critics will say! Will they have freedom and boldness enough to get over this? Understanding comes in the way of the French; they cannot believe that fancy has its own laws, to which the understanding does not and can not penetrate.

"Fancy has not much power where it does not originate things which must ever be problems to the understanding. It is this which separates poetry from prose, in which understanding always is, and always should be, at home."

I now took leave, for it was ten o'clock. We had been sitting without a light; the clear summer evening shining from the north over Ettersberg.

Monday evening, July 9.

I found Goethe alone, looking at the casts which had been taken from the Stosch cabinet. "My Berlin friends," said he, "have had the kindness to send me this whole collection to examine. I am already acquainted with most of these fine things; but now I see them in the instructive arrangement of Winckelmann. I use his description, and consult him in cases where I myself am doubtful."

The Chancellor came in. He told us a piece of news from the Gazette about the keeper of a menagerie, who had killed a lion out of desire to taste his flesh.

"I wonder," said Goethe, "he did not rather try an ape; that would be a tender, relishing morsel."

We talked of the hatefulness of these beasts, remarking that they were so much the more unpleasant, as they were more like men.

"I do not understand," said the Chancellor, "how princes can keep these animals near them, and, indeed, take pleasure in them."

"Princes," said Goethe, "are so much tormented by disagreeable men, that they regard these more disagreeable animals as a means of balancing the other impressions. We common people naturally dislike apes and the screaming of paroquets, because we see them in circumstances in which they were not made. If we could ride upon elephants among palm-trees, we should there find apes and paroquets quite in their place, perhaps pleasant; but, as I said, princes naturally must drive away one unpleasant thing with something still more unpleasant."

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The Chancellor turned the conversation on the present state of the opposition, and the ministerial party, at Paris, repeating, almost word for word, a speech, which an extremely bold democrat had made against the minister, in defending himself before a court of justice. We have reason once again to marvel at the memory of the Chancellor. There was much conversation upon this subject, and upon the censure of the press, Goethe showing himself, as usual, a mild aristocrat, and his friend taking his usual ground on the side of the people.

"I have no fears for the French," said Goethe; "they stand upon such a height that intellect cannot be repressed. This law can have only a beneficent effect, as its limitations are directed only against personalities. An opposition which has no limits is a flat affair; but its limits oblige it to become intellectual, and this is a great advantage. To speak out an opinion directly and harshly is only excusable when that opinion is perfectly right; but a party, if only because it is a party, cannot be wholly in the right; therefore those indirect means in which the French have been such models are the best. I say to my servant, 'John, pull off my boots,' and he understands; but, if I wish the service from a friend, I must not speak so bluntly, but find some pleasant, friendly way to ask for this kind office. This necessity excites my mind; and, for the same reason, I like some restraint upon the press.

"The French have always had the reputation of being the most *spirituel* of nations, and they ought

to keep it. We Germans tumble out our opinions without ceremony, and have not acquired much skill in going round about.

"The parties at Paris would be still greater than they are, if they were more liberal and free, and understood each other better than they do. They stand upon a higher step, in the view of general history, than the English; the opposing powers of whose Parliament paralyze one another, and where the deeper insight of any individual can scarcely have fair play, as we see by Canning, and the many troubles which beset that great statesman."

We rose to go, but Goethe was so full of life that the conversation was continued awhile standing. At last he bid us an affectionate farewell, and I walked home with the Chancellor. It was a beautiful evening, and we talked much of Goethe as we went; but, especially, we repeated his remark that an unlimited opposition soon becomes a flat affair.

Sunday, 15th July.

I went, at eight o'clock this evening, to see Goethe, whom I found just returned from his garden.

"Do you see what lies there?" said he; "a romance, in three volumes; and from whom, think you? from Manzoni."

I looked at the books, which were very handsomely bound, and inscribed to Goethe.

"I know nothing of him," said I, "except his ode to Napoleon, which I lately read again in your translation, and have admired extremely. Each stanza is a picture."

"Yes," said Goethe, "the ode is excellent; but who speaks of it in Germany? It might as well not have been translated, although it is the best poem which has been made upon the subject."

Goethe continued reading the English newspapers, with which I had found him engaged when I came in. I took up that volume of Carlyle's translation of "German Romance" which contains Musæus and Fouqué. This Englishman, who is so intimately acquainted with our literature, had prefixed to every translation a memoir and a criticism of the author. I read that upon Fouqué, and remarked with pleasure that the memoir showed much intellect and depth of thought, and the critical view was distinguished by great understanding, and tranquil, mild insight for poetic merits. At one time, the intellectual Englishman compares Fouqué to the voice of a singer, which has no great compass, and but few tones, but those few good and finely harmonized. To illustrate his meaning further, he says that Fouqué does not take, in the poetic church, the place of a bishop or dignitary of the first rank, but rather satisfies himself with performing well the duties of a chaplain.

While I had been reading, Goethe had gone into the back chamber. He sent for me to come to him there.

"Sit down," said he, "and let us talk awhile. A new translation of Sophocles has just arrived. It reads well, and seems to be excellent; I will compare it with Solger. Now, what say you to Carlyle?"

I told him what I had been reading upon Fouqué.

"Is not that very good?" said Goethe. "Over the

sea, also, there are discreet people, who can understand and treat us worthily.

"The Germans," continued Goethe, "have good heads in other departments. I have been reading, in the Berlin Register, the criticism of an historian upon Schlosser, which is very great. The signature is Heinrich Leo, a person of whom I never heard, but about whom I must inquire. He stands higher than the French, which is much to say in an historical point of view. They stick too much by the real, and cannot get at the ideal, of which the German is in full possession. He has admirable views upon the castes of India. Much is said of aristocracy and democracy; but the whole affair is simply this: in youth, when we either possess nothing, or know not how to value the tranquil possession of any thing, we are democrats; but, when we, in a long life, have come to possess something of our own, we wish not only ourselves to be secure of it, but that our children and grandchildren should be secure of inheriting it. Therefore, we always lean to aristocracy in our old age, whatever were our opinions in youth. Leo speaks with great discrimination upon this point.

"We are weakest in the æsthetic department, and may look long before we meet such a man as Carlyle. It is pleasant to see that the intercourse is now so close between the French, English, and Germans, that they can correct one another. This is the greatest use of a world-literature, which will show itself more and more.

"Carlyle has written a life of Schiller, and judged him throughout as it would be difficult for a German

to judge. On the other hand, we perhaps appreciate Shakspeare and Byron better than the English themselves."

Wednesday, 18th July.

"Let me announce to you," was Goethe's first salutation at dinner, "that Manzoni's romance soars far above all which we possess of the kind. I need say to you nothing more, except that the inmost, all which comes from the soul of the poet, is absolutely perfect; and that the outward, the drawing of localities, and the like, is no way inferior. While reading, we are always passing from tenderness to admiration, and again from admiration to tenderness; you are always full of one of these powerful emotions. One can scarce do any thing finer. Not till this romance has Manzoni rightly shown what he is. In this we see his inmost being, which he had no opportunity to display in his dramatic works. I intend now to take up the best romances of Walter Scott, — perhaps Waverley, which I have never yet read, — and see how Manzoni compares with this great writer.

"Manzoni's soul appears so elevated, that scarcely any thing can approach it. The fruit is perfectly ripe. In the management of details, he is as clear as the Italian heaven itself."

"Has he any marks of sentimentality?" said I.

"Nowhere," replied Goethe; "he has sentiment, but is perfectly free from sentimentality; his feeling of every situation is manly and genuine; but I will say no more to-day. I have not yet finished the first volume; by and by you shall hear more."

Saturday, 21st July.

When I came into Goethe's room this evening, I found him reading Manzoni's romance.

"I am in the third volume already," said he, as he laid aside the book, "and am receiving many new thoughts. You know Aristotle says of tragedy, 'If good, it will excite fear.' This is true, not only of tragedy, but of many other sorts of invention. You find it in my *Gott und die Bayadere*. You find it in good comedies also."

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"This fear may be of two sorts; it may exist in the shape of anxiety, (*Bangigkeit*,) or in that of alarm, (*Angst*.) The first feeling is awakened, when we see a moral evil threatening, and gradually overshadowing, the persons about whom we are interested, as in the 'Elective Affinities;' but alarm, when we see them threatened with physical danger, as in *Der Freyschutz*. Manzoni is remarkably successful in making use of alarm, which he softens, at last, into emotion, and thus leads us to admiration. The feeling of alarm is necessarily caused by the circumstances, and will be excited in every reader; but that of admiration, being excited by the writer's skill, belongs only to the connoisseur. What say you to my æsthetics? If I were younger, I would write somewhat upon this theory, though perhaps not so comprehensive a work as this of Manzoni.

"I am curious to know what the gentlemen of the 'Globe' will say to this romance. They have discrimination enough to perceive its excellences; and the whole tendency of the work would bring water to

the mill of these liberals, although Manzoni has shown himself very moderate; but the French seldom give themselves up to a work with such simplicity as we; they cannot adapt themselves to the author's point of view, but always find, even in the best, something which is not to their mind, and which the author ought to have done differently."

Goethe then described to me some parts of the romance, in order to show me in what spirit it was written.

"Four things," said he, "contribute especially to the excellence of Manzoni's works. First, that he is so fine a historian, and, consequently, gives his inventions a depth and dignity which are not usually found in romances. Secondly, the Catholic religion is favorable to him, giving him many poetical relations, which he could not have had as a Protestant. Then, his day, being one of revolutionary ferment, is favorable to his writings; for, if he himself has not shared the troubles of such a period, he has seen his friends overtaken, often ruined by them. Fourthly, it is in favor of this romance, that the scene is laid in the charming country near Lake Como, which has been stamped on the poet's mind, from youth upwards, till he knows it by heart. Thence arises also that distinguishing merit of the work — its distinctness and wonderful accuracy in describing localities."

Monday, 23d July.

When I asked for Goethe, about eight o'clock this evening, they said he had not yet returned from the garden. I found him in the Park, sitting on a bench

in the shade of the lindens; his grandson, Wolfgang, at his side. He seemed glad to see me, and desired me to sit down by him. We had no sooner exchanged salutations, than the conversation again turned upon Manzoni.

"I told you lately," Goethe began, "that the historian had been of great use to the romance-writer; but I find in the third volume, that the historical minuteness hurts the poetry. For Signor Manzoni throws off, sometimes, his poetic drapery, and stands there in historic bareness. This happens in his descriptions of famine, war, and pestilence; in themselves so repulsive, and now made insufferable by the circumstantial details of a dry chronicle.

"The German translator must seek to shun this fault; he must get rid of a large part of the war and famine, and two thirds of the plague; only leaving what is necessary to carry on the action. If Manzoni had had at his side a friendly adviser, he might easily have shunned this fault; but he had, as an historian, too great a respect for reality. This is the reason of his putting what is left of the historical material in notes to his dramas. Here he could not get rid of his historical furniture in the same manner, and a part of his work is encumbered by it; but so soon as the persons of the romance come forward again, the poet reappears in all his glory, and compels us to our accustomed admiration."

We rose and turned our steps to the house.

"You will hardly understand," said Goethe, "how a poet like Manzoni, capable of so admirable compositions, could sin for a moment against the spirit

of poetry. Yet the cause is simple, and it is this: Manzoni, like Schiller, was born a poet. Our times are so bad, that the poet can find no nature fit for his use, in the human life which surrounds him. To build himself up, Schiller seized on the two great subjects, philosophy and history; Manzoni, on history alone. Schiller's 'Wallenstein' is so great, that there will be nothing like it of the same sort; yet you will find that his powerful helpers, history and philosophy, have injured various parts of the work, and prevented its being purely poetical. And so suffers Manzoni, from a too great load of history."

"Your excellency," said I, "speaks great things, and I am happy in hearing you."

"Manzoni," said Goethe, "helps us to good thoughts."

The conversation was here interrupted by the Chancellor, who met us at the garden door. This welcome friend joined us, and we accompanied Goethe up the little stair, through the chamber of busts, into the long saloon, where the curtains were let down, and two lights burning on the table near the window. We sat down by the table, and Goethe and the Chancellor talked upon subjects of another nature.

Monday, 24th September.

I went with Goethe to Berka. We drove off soon after eight o'clock. It was a very beautiful morning. The road is up hill at first, and, as there was nothing in the scenery worth looking at, we talked on literary subjects. A well-known German poet had lately passed through Weimar, and shown Goethe his album.

"You would scarcely believe what weak stuff I found in it," said Goethe; "all the poets write as if they were sick, and the whole world a lazaretto. All speak of the miseries of this life, and the joys of the other; and each malecontent excites still greater dissatisfaction in his neighbors. This is a sad abuse of poetry, which was given us to smooth away the rough places of life, and make man satisfied with the world and his situation. The present generation fears all genuine power, and is only at home and poetical amid weakness. I have found a good word to plague these gentlemen; I will call theirs the lazaretto poetry. The genuine Tyrtæus vein endows man with courage to endure the conflicts of life."

Goethe's words received my full assent. My attention was excited by an osier basket, with two handles, which lay at our feet in the carriage.

"I brought it," said Goethe, "from Marienbad, where they have such baskets of all sizes, and am so accustomed to it that I cannot travel without it. You see when it is empty it can be folded close together, and takes up little room. It will, however, hold more than you would think. It is pliable, and yet so strong that you can carry the heaviest things in it."

"It looks very picturesque, and even antique," said I.

"You are right," said Goethe; "it is like the antique, not only because so well adapted to its end, but because it has so simple and pleasing a form. We may indeed say that it is complete in its kind. It has been particularly useful to me in my excursions over the Bohemian Mountains. At present it contains our

breakfast. If I had a hammer, I might have an opportunity to-day to knock off a piece here and there, and bring it home full of stones."

We had now reached the heights, and had a free lookout towards the hills behind which Berka lies. A little to the left we saw into the valley, in the direction of Hetschburg, where, on the other side of the Ilm, is a hill, which now turned towards us its shadowy side, and, on account of the vapors of the Ilm, which hovered before it, seemed blue to my eye. I looked at the same spot through my glass, and the blue was obviously diminished. I observed this to Goethe. "Thus you see," said I, "what a part the subject plays with these objective colors; a weak eye asserts the gloom; a sharpened one drives the vapors away, or makes them fade."

"Your remark is perfectly just," said Goethe; "a good spy-glass dispels the blue tint of the most distant mountains. The subject has, in all phenomena, far more importance than is supposed. Wieland knew this well when he was wont to say, 'One could easily amuse people, if they were only amusable.'"

We laughed at the pleasant meaning of this saying. We had been descending the little valley, where the road passes over a wooden bridge with a roof, under which the rain torrents, which flow down from Hetschburg, had made a channel, which was at present dry. Highway laborers were using, about the bridge, some reddish sand-stones, which attracted Goethe's attention. Perhaps a bow-shot over the bridge, where the road goes up the hill, which separates the traveller from Berka, Goethe bade the coachman stop.

"We will get out here," said he, "and see whether our breakfast will not relish well in the open air."

We got out, and looked about us. The servant spread a napkin upon a four-cornered pile of stones, such as usually lie by the road-side, and brought the osier basket from the carriage, out of which they took roast partridge, new wheaten rolls, and fresh cucumbers. Goethe cut a partridge, and gave me half; I ate, standing up and walking about. Goethe had seated himself on the corner of the heap of stones. The coldness of the stones, on which the night dew was still resting, must hurt him, thought I, and expressed my anxiety. Goethe, however, assured me it would not hurt him, and then I felt myself quite tranquil, regarding it as a new token of the inward strength he must feel. Meanwhile, the servants had brought a bottle of wine from the carriage, and filled for us.

"Our friend Schütze," said Goethe, "is quite right to fly to the country every week; we will take pattern by him, and, if this fine weather continues, this shall not be our last excursion."

I was rejoiced by this assurance.

I passed, afterwards, with Goethe, a most interesting day, partly in Berka, partly in Tonndorf. His communications, in which he was inexhaustible, were full of the finest thought; especially he talked much of the second part of "Faust," on which he was just beginning to work in earnest; and I lament so much the more, that I find in my journal no further notes upon the day.

Sunday, 15th June, 1828.

While we were still at table, Herr Seidel was announced, accompanied by the Tyrolese. The singers remained in the next room; we could see them perfectly through the open door, and their song was heard to advantage from that distance. Seidel sat down with us. These songs of the cheerful Tyrolese, with their peculiar burden, delighted us young people. Fraulein Ulrica and I were particularly pleased with the *Strauss* and *Du, du, liegst mir im Herzen*, and asked for a copy of them. Goethe was by no means as much delighted as we.

"Ask children and birds," said he, "how cherries and strawberries taste."

Between the songs they played national dances, on a sort of cithern, which was laid down on a rest, accompanied by a clear-toned German flute.

Young Goethe was called out. He returned and dismissed the Tyrolese. He sat down with us again. We talked of the great concourse of people who had come together from all quarters to see Oberon; so that at noon it was impossible to get a ticket. Young Goethe proposed that we should leave the table.

"Dear father," said he, "our friends will wish to go early to the theatre this evening."

Goethe thought such haste very unnecessary, as it was but just four o'clock; however, he made no opposition, and we scattered ourselves through the apartments. Seidel came to me and some others, and said softly, and with a troubled brow,

"You need expect no pleasure at the theatre; there

will be no play; the *Grand Duke is dead;* he died on his journey hither from Berlin."

A general shock went through the company. Goethe comes in; we dissemble, and talk of indifferent things. Goethe called me to the window, to talk about the Tyrolese, and the theatre.

"You have my box," said he, "and need not go to the theatre till six: stay after the others, that we may have a little chat."

Young Goethe, meanwhile, was sending the guests away, that he might have time to break the news to his father before the return of the Chancellor, who had brought it to him. Goethe could not understand his son's conduct, and seemed annoyed.

"Will you not stay for coffee?" said he; "it is only four o'clock."

But they all declined; and I, too, took my hat.

"What, are you too going?" said he.

His son excused me, by saying I had something to do before going to the theatre. We went up stairs with Fraulein Ulrica, while young Goethe communicated the sad tidings to his father.

I saw Goethe late in the evening. As I opened the door of his chamber, I heard him sighing and talking to himself: he seemed to feel that an irreparable rent had been torn in his existence: he would lend an ear to no sort of consolation.

"I thought," said he, "that I should depart before him; but God disposes as he thinks best; and all that we poor mortals have to do, is to endure, and hold ourselves upright, as we best may, and as long as we can."

The Grand Duchess Mother received the melancholy news at her summer residence of Wilhelmsthal. The younger members of the family were in Russia. Goethe went soon to Dornburg, in order to withdraw himself from daily saddening impressions, and renew his activity amid other associations.

From France he had received new instigation to continue his botanical researches; and this rural abode, where he was constantly surrounded by vines and flowers, was very favorable to such studies.

I visited him there, in company with his daughter-in-law and grandchildren. He seemed very happy, and repeatedly expressed his delight at the beautiful situation of the Castle and gardens.

In fact, he had, from windows at such a height, an enchanting prospect. Beneath was the variegated valley, with the Saale meandering through the meadows. On the opposite side, toward the east, were wooded hills, over which the eye could pursue, into the distance, the retreating showers; and observe, to equal advantage, the eastern constellations and the rising sun.

"I enjoy here," said Goethe, "day and night equally. Often before dawn I awake, and lie down by the open window, to enjoy the splendor of the three planets, which are at present to be seen together, and the gradual irradiation of the clouds. I pass almost the whole day in the open air, and hold spiritual communion with the tendrils of the vine, which say many good things to me, and of which I could tell you wonders. Also, I write once more poems which are not bad. Could it be permitted me, I would fain continue to live as I do now."

Thursday, 11th September.

Goethe returned to-day from Dornburg. He looked very well, and quite browned by the sun. He sat down almost immediately to dinner, in the chamber next the garden, whose doors stood open. He told us of many visits and presents which he had received; and seemed to please himself with frequent light jests. Yet one who could look deeply into his feelings, could not but perceive a certain embarrassment, like one who returns into a situation girt about by manifold relationships, views, and requisitions.

During the first course, a message came from the Grand Duchess Mother, expressing her pleasure at Goethe's return, and announcing that she should make him a visit the following Tuesday.

Since the death of the Grand Duke, Goethe had seen no member of the reigning family. He had, indeed, corresponded constantly with the Grand Duchess Mother, so that they had expressed their feelings upon their common loss; yet the personal interview could not but awake painful emotions. Neither had Goethe yet seen the young Duke and Duchess, nor paid his homage to the new rulers of the land. All this was before him now, which, if it could not disturb the accomplished man of the world, yet must hinder his genius from living on in its natural direction and full activity. Visits, too, threatened him from all countries. The meeting at Berlin of celebrated natural philosophers had set in motion many important personages, most of whom would take Weimar in their way. This must occasion whole weeks of disturbance, such as was always caused at

Weimar, by visits in many ways so valuable; and all this Goethe foresaw, as he reëntered his own house. What made this worse was, that the fifth section of his works, which was to contain the *Wanderjahre*, had been promised for the press at Christmas. Goethe had begun to work over this romance, which originally came out in one volume, melting so much new into the old, that it might appear in a new edition, as a work in three volumes.

Much is done, but also much to do. The manuscript has every where gaps in white paper, which are to be filled out. Here something is wanting to the exposition; here is to be found a suitable link to prevent the reader from perceiving that this is a collective work; here are fragments of great interest, some of which want a beginning, others an end; so that, altogether, there is much to do to the three volumes, to give the work attraction and gracefulness proportioned to its value.

Goethe had shown me this manuscript in the spring, and I had advised him to set aside all his other labors, and devote the summer to its completion. He had intended to do so; but the death of the Grand Duke had taken from him the tranquillity and cheerfulness necessary to such a composition, and he needed all his strength merely to sustain such a blow. Now, on his return, remembering how little time was left him for his work, he naturally felt much embarrassed by the disturbances which he foresaw.

Professor Abeken, of Osnabrück, had sent me, before the 28th of August, an enclosure, requesting me to give it to Goethe on his birth-day, and saying it

related to Schiller, and would certainly give him pleasure. When he was speaking to-day of his birth-day presents, I asked him what that package contained.

"Something very interesting," said Goethe, "and which really gave me great pleasure. An amiable lady, who once received Schiller at tea, conceived the happy idea of writing down all he said. She comprehended it well, and related it with accuracy, so that, on reading it after so long an interval, one is translated immediately into a situation which is now passed by with a thousand others as interesting, while the living spirit of this one only was caught and transferred to paper.

"Schiller appears here, as always, in perfect possession of his elevated nature. He seems as great at the tea-table as he would have done in a council of state. Nothing constrains him, nothing narrows him, nothing draws downward the flight of his thoughts. His great views are expressed freely and fearlessly. He was a true man, such as we should all be. We others are always in bondage to something. The persons, the objects that surround us, have their influence upon us. The tea-spoon constrains us, if it is of gold, instead of silver, as usual. And so, paralyzed by a thousand side-views, we do not succeed, if there is any thing great in our nature, in expressing it freely. We are the slaves of objects round us, and appear little or important according as these restrain or give us leave to dilate."

He was silent. The conversation turned on other subjects; but I continued to meditate on these words, which had touched my inmost consciousness.

Wednesday, October 1, 1828.

Mr. Hönninghausen, from Crefeld, a great merchant, and also very fond of natural philosophy, — a man enriched with various knowledge, both from travel and study, — dined with Goethe to-day.

He was returning from the Berlin assembly; and much was said on subjects of natural history, especially of mineralogy.

There was much talk also about the Vulcanists, and of the various ways by which men formed their opinions and theories upon nature. The great natural historians, and especially Aristotle, were mentioned, about whom Goethe spoke thus: —

"Aristotle has better observed Nature than any modern, but he was too rash in his inferences and conclusions. We must go to work slowly and indulgently (*lasslich*) with nature, if we would get any thing from her.

"When I had arrived at a conclusion in my inquiries, I did not expect that Nature would immediately confirm my opinion, but continued to test it by new observations and experiments, satisfied if she had the kindness occasionally to respond to my wishes. If she would not, then I took some other way to pursue her, through which, perhaps, I might find her more kindly disposed."

Friday, 3d October.

To-day, at dinner, I talked with Goethe about Fouqué's *Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg*, which I had read, according to his wish. We agreed in this — that Fouqué had spent a life in studies connected

with ancient German history, without drawing from them at last any valuable knowledge.

"From those old German gloomy times," said Goethe, "we can obtain as little as from the national songs of the Servians, or other barbarians. We can read and be interested about them a while, but must at last cast them aside, and let them lie behind us. Generally speaking, a man is quite sufficiently saddened by his own passions and destiny; he need not make himself more gloomy, by looking into the darkness of barbaric early days. He needs enlightening and cheering influences, and must therefore turn to those eras in art and literature, during which remarkable men could obtain that degree of culture which made them satisfied with themselves, and able to impart similar satisfaction to others.

"But, if you would have a good opinion of Fouqué, read his *Undine*, which is really a most charming story. The materials are so excellent, that I should scarcely say the writer had made all possible use of them; however, *Undine* will be sure to give you pleasure."

"I have been unfortunate in the circumstances of my acquaintance with the most modern German literature," said I. "I read the poems of Egon Ebert just after my first acquaintance with Voltaire, and, indeed, just after I had been reading Voltaire's little poems addressed to individuals, which certainly belong to the best which he has ever written. And now, just as I was deeply engaged in Walter Scott's 'Fair Maid of Perth,' the first work of this great writer which I had ever read, I am induced to put it aside, and busy myself with Fouqué."

"Against these great foreigners," said Goethe, "the modern German writers cannot keep their ground; but it is desirable that you should, by degrees, make the acquaintance of all writers, foreign and domestic, that you may see how the high culture, which the poet needs, is best to be obtained."

Frau von Goethe came in at this moment, and sat down to the table with us.

"But," continued Goethe, with animation, "do you not find Walter Scott's 'Fair Maid of Perth' excellent? There is finish! there is a hand! What a clear plan for the whole, and in details no touch which does not conduce to the catastrophe! I do not know whether the dialogues or descriptions are the best.

"His scenes and situations remind me of the pictures of Teniers; in the plan they show the height of art. Individual figures have a speaking truth, and the least details show the pervading love of the artist for his work. How far have you read?"

"I have come," said I, "to the passage where Henry Smith carries the pretty minstrel girl through the streets, and round about lanes, home; and when, to his great vexation, Proudfoot and Dwining met him."

"Ah, that is excellent," said Goethe; "that the obstinate and honest blacksmith should be brought, at last, to take with him not only the suspicious maiden, but her little dog, is one of the finest things that are to be found in any romance. It shows an eye for human nature, to which the deepest mysteries lie open."

"It was also," said I, "an excellent idea to make the heroine's father a glover, who has been, and

must be, connected with the Highlanders by his trade in skins."

"Yes," said Goethe, "a most admirable idea. From this circumstance spring the relations and situations most favorable for the whole book, and which, by this means, also obtain a foundation in reality, and thence an air of the most convincing truth. You find every where in Walter Scott a remarkable security and thoroughness in his delineations, which proceed from a comprehensive knowledge of the real world, which he has obtained by life-long studies and observations, and a daily acquaintance with the most important relations. His comprehensive existence corresponds with his great genius. You remember the English critic, who compares the poet with voices for singing, of which some can command only a few fine tones, while others can, at pleasure, run through the whole compass, equally at their ease, with the highest and lowest note. Walter Scott is one of this last sort. In the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' you will not find a single weak passage, where you feel as if his knowledge and genius were not equal to the utmost demands of the occasion. He was prepared to use all his materials; the king, the royal brothers, the prince, the great ecclesiastics, the nobles, the magistracy, the citizen mechanics, the Highlanders, are all drawn with the same sure hand, and finished with equal truth."

"The English," said Frau von Goethe, "are particularly partial to Henry Smith, and Scott seems to have intended him for the hero of the book; but he is not my favorite; I like the Prince."

"The Prince," said I, "wins our affections, indeed,

with all his wildness, and he is as well drawn as any."

"The passage," said Goethe, "where he, sitting on horseback, makes the pretty minstrel girl step upon his foot, that he may give her a kiss, is in the boldest English style. But you women are wrong always to take sides as you do. Usually, you read a book to find something for the heart; to find a hero, whom you could love; but that is not the way to read, and it is not important whether this or that character please, but that the book please."

"We women were made so, dear father," said she, leaning over the table to press his hand.

"Well, we must let you be in your own lovely ways," replied Goethe.

He took up the "Globe."

"How the writers in the 'Globe,'" said he, "enhance its importance every day! What men they are! How pervaded with one wish and one idea! People here have scarce any notion of such things. Such a paper would be an impossibility for Germany. We are distinct individuals; harmony and concert are unattainable; each has the opinions of his province, his city, and his own idiosyncracies; and it will be a long while before we have a standard of common culture."

Tuesday, 7th October.

To-day at dinner was the pleasantest society. Beside our Weimar friends, some of the philosophers were there, on their return from Berlin; among whom,

Von Martius, from Munich, who sat next Goethe, was known to me. There were jokes and conversations on various subjects. Goethe was particularly good-humored and communicative. Much was said of the opera last given — Rossini's "Moses." They found fault with the subject; both praised and found fault with the music.

Goethe said, "I do not understand, my good children, how you can separate the subject from the music, and enjoy each by itself. You say the subject is miserable; but you can set that aside, and enjoy the excellent music. I do not understand this arrangement in your natures; how your ears can be in a state to enjoy pleasant sounds, while the most powerful sense, vision, is tormented by the absurdest objects. And how absurd is this 'Moses'! When the curtain rises, there you see the people at prayer. This is very unfit. It is written 'When thou prayest, go into thy closet, and shut the door;' and will you pray on the stage?

"I would have made a wholly different 'Moses,' and begun the piece otherwise. I would have first shown you how the children of Israel suffered from their vassalage to the Egyptians, in order to bring into bolder relief the merit of Moses in freeing them from this shameful oppression."

He then built up his opera step by step, through all the scenes and acts, full of life and meaning, in historical harmony with the subject, to the astonishment of the company, who could not sufficiently admire the irresistible flow of his thoughts, and the gay profusion

of his inventions. 'Twas done too quickly for me to seize it. I only remember the dance of the Egyptians, which Goethe introduced to express their joy at the return of light, after the miraculous darkness.

The conversation turned from Moses to the deluge, and took, from the presence of the distinguished naturalists, a new turn.

"If," said Von Martius, "they have found on Ararat, a petrified piece of the ark of Noah, why should they not find petrified skulls of the first men?"

This led to a conversation about the various races of men — how black, brown, yellow, and white inhabit different climates, and whether all men are descended from the single pair, Adam and Eve.

Von Martius was for the biblical account, which he sought to confirm by the maxim, Nature goes to work as economically as possible.

"I cannot agree to that," said Goethe; "I maintain rather that Nature is lavish, even prodigal; and it would show more acquaintance with her, to believe she has, instead of one single poor pair, produced men by dozens or hundreds.

"When the earth had arrived at a certain point of maturity, the water had ebbed away, and the land gave signs of green, came the epoch for the creation of man. Men arose, through the omnipotence of God, wherever the ground permitted; perhaps on the heights first.

"To believe that this happened, I esteem reasonable; but to attempt to decide how it happened, I esteem useless; and we will leave it to those who, having

nothing better to do, busy themselves willingly with insoluble problems."

"If I," said Von Martius, archly, "could, as a naturalist, yield to your excellency's opinion, I should, as a good Christian, find some difficulty in adopting a view which cannot well be reconciled with the account given us in Holy Writ."

"Holy Writ," replied Goethe, "speaks, certainly, only of one pair of human beings, whom God made on the sixth day; but the gifted men, who wrote that record, had in view their own, the chosen people; and we will not dispute the descent of that people from Adam and Eve. But we, and tall, slender men, handsomer than we, as well as the Negroes and Laplanders, had, certainly, different ancestors; and this worthy company must confess that we are, at present, a quite distinct race from the genuine descendants of Adam, and that they, at least in money-making, are greatly our superiors."

We laughed; the conversation became general. Goethe, excited by Von Martius to argument, said many interesting things, which veiled a deep meaning under a jesting exterior.

After dinner, the Prussian Minister, Herr von Jordan, was announced, and we went into the next room to receive him.

Wednesday, 8th October.

Tieck, returning from a journey to the Rhineland, with his wife, his daughters, and Countess Finkenstein, dined with Goethe to-day. I met them in the ante-

room. Tieck looked very well; the Rhine baths seemed to have had a favorable effect upon his health. I told him that I had been reading Sir Walter Scott's new novel, and what pleasure it had given me.

"I think," said Tieck, "that I may find this romance of Scott's, which I have not read as yet, the best he has ever written; however, he is so great a writer, that the first you know of him always excites astonishment, approach him on what side you will."

Professor Göttling came in, just returned from his journey to Italy. I was extremely glad to see him again, and drew him to a window, that he might tell me what he had seen.

"To Rome!" said he; "you must to Rome, if you would make something of yourself! That is indeed a city! that is a life! that is a world! As soon as we enter Rome, we are transformed, and feel ourselves great, like the objects which surround us."

"Why," said I, "did you not stay longer?"

"My money, and my leave of absence, were at an end. I cannot describe my feelings when I turned my back upon Italy."

Goethe came in, and greeted his guests. He talked awhile with Tieck and his family, then offered the Countess his arm to the dining-room. We followed. The conversation was lively and unconstrained, but I could retain little of its substance.

After dinner, the Princes von Oldenberg were announced. We then went up to Frau von Goethe's apartment, where Fraulein Agnes Tieck seated herself

at the instrument, and gave us the song, *Im Felde schleich' ich still und wild*, with a fine alto voice, and so thoroughly in the spirit of the situation, that it made an ineffaceable impression on the mind.

Thursday, 9th October.

I dined, to-day, in private, with Goethe and Frau von Goethe. Rossini's "Moses" was spoken of, and we recalled, with pleasure, what Goethe had said a day or two previous.

"What I said, in the good-humored merriment of the moment, about 'Moses,'" said he, "I cannot recall; for such things are done quite unconsciously. But of this I am certain, that I cannot enjoy an opera, unless the story is as good as the music, so that the two may keep step with one another. If you ask what opera suits me, I would name the *Wasserträger;* for here the subject is so well managed, that, if given as a drama, without music, it might be seen with pleasure. Either composers in general do not attach any importance to a good foundation, or they have not poets suited to aid them. If the *Freischütz* had not been so good a subject, it would hardly have drawn such crowds by the charm of the music merely; and, therefore, Kind should have some share in the honor."

After talking a little longer on this, we spoke of Professor Göttling, and his travels in Italy.

"I cannot blame the good man," said Goethe, "for speaking of Italy with such enthusiasm; I well remember what my own feelings were. Indeed, I may say that only in Rome have I felt what it is to be a man. The same elevation, the same blissfulness

of feeling, I have never known at any after period; indeed, compared with my situation at Rome, I may say I have never since known happiness."

"But," continued he, after a pause, "we will not give ourselves up to melancholy thoughts. Let us talk of your 'Fair Maid of Perth.' How far have you read? Tell me about it."

"I read slowly," said I. "I am now at the place where Proudfoot, having put on Henry Smith's armor, and imitating his walk and whistle, is slain, and found in the street by the citizens, who, taking him for Smith, raise a great outcry through the city."

"That," said Goethe, "is one of the best scenes."

"I have been particularly struck," said I, "with Scott's great talent for disentangling confused situations, so that all separates into masses and quiet pictures, leaving on our minds an impression as if we, like superior beings, had looked down, and seen, at once, events which were occurring in various places."

"Generally," said Goethe, "he shows great understanding of art; for which reason, those like us, who always look to see *how* things are done, find especial pleasure and profit in his works.

"You will find, in the third volume, an admirable contrivance. You have already seen how the Prince makes, in council, the wise proposal to let the rebel Highlanders destroy one another in combat, and how Palm Sunday is appointed for the battle. You will see with what dexterity Scott manages to make one man fail on the decisive day, and to introduce his hero, Smith, in his place. It is admirably done; and you will be delighted when you come to it.

"But, when you have finished the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' you must read 'Waverley,' which is quite a different thing, and may be set beside the best works that have ever been written in this world. We see the same man who wrote the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' but before he had yet won the favor of the public. He therefore collects his forces more, and is admirable at every step. In the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' the writer holds a more rapid pen. He is sure of his public, and his style is broader and freer. After reading 'Waverley,' you will understand why Walter Scott always designates himself as author of that work; for, in that first published novel, he showed what he could do, and has never since surpassed, or even equalled it."

In honor of Tieck, a very pleasant tea-party was given this evening in the apartment of Frau von Goethe. I here made the acquaintance of Count and Countess Medem. They told me of their having to-day seen Goethe, and how happy it had made them.

We had hoped that Tieck would read, and he consented to do so. A wide circle was made with chairs and sofas, and he read "Clavigo."

I had often read and felt this drama; but now it appeared to me quite new, and made a singularly deep impression. It seemed as if heard from the stage, only better. Each character and situation was given with more entireness of feeling; it had the effect of an acted play, in which each part is well performed.

It would be hard to say what parts Tieck read

best; whether tranquil, clear scenes, addressed to the intellect; whether those in which the powers and passions of the male characters were brought out; or moments of tortured love. For giving expression to passages of this sort, he had especial qualifications. The scene between Marie and Clavigo still sounds in my ears: the oppressed bosom, the stifling and trembling of the voices; broken, almost suffocated words and sounds; the panting and sobbing of a hot heart, accompanied with tears; — all this is still present with me, never to be forgotten. Every hearer was absorbed, and wholly carried away. The lights burned dim; nobody thought of that, or ventured to snuff them, for fear of the slightest interruption. Tears, constantly dropping from the eyes of the women, showed the profound effect of the piece, and were the highest tribute that could be paid, either to the reader or the poet.

Tieck had finished and rose, wiping the big drops from his forehead; but the hearers still seemed fettered to their chairs. Each man seemed too deeply engaged with what had just been passing through his soul to have ready suitable words of gratitude for him who had produced so wonderful an effect upon us all. However, we recovered ourselves by degrees. The company arose, and talked cheerfully with one another. Then we partook of a supper, which stood ready on little tables in the next room.

Goethe was not present in person this evening; but his spirit and a remembrance of him were living among us. He sent an apology to Tieck; and to his daughters, Agnes and Dorothea, two handkerchief-

pins, with his own picture and red favors, which Frau von Goethe fastened to their dresses, so that they looked like little orders.

Friday, 10th October.

From Mr. William Frazer, of London, editor of the "Foreign Review," I received, this morning, two copies of the third number of that periodical, and gave one of them to Goethe at dinner.

I found again a pleasant dinner party, invited in honor of Tieck and the Countess, who, at the urgent request of Goethe and their other friends, had remained a day behind the rest of the family, who had set out for Dresden.

At table, we talked much of English literature, and especially of Walter Scott. Tieck said that he himself, ten years ago, first brought to Germany a copy of Waverley.

Saturday, 11th October.

The above-mentioned number of the "Foreign Review" contained, with a variety of other important and interesting articles, also a very fine essay, by Carlyle, upon Goethe, which I passed the morning in studying.

I went to see Goethe a little before the dinner hour, that I might have an opportunity to talk this over. I found him, as I wished, still alone, expecting the company. He wore his black coat and star, with which I so willingly see him. He appeared to-day in youthful high spirits, and we began immediately to speak on topics interesting to both. Goethe told me

that he had been looking at Carlyle's article upon him this morning, and we were both ready to praise these efforts among foreigners.

"It is pleasant to see," said Goethe, "that the Scotch are giving up their early pedantry, are now more in earnest, and more profound. When I recollect how the "Edinburgh Review" treated my works, not many years since, and when I now consider Carlyle's merits towards German literature, I am astonished at the important step which has been taken towards a better end."

"In Carlyle," said I, "I venerate most of all the spirit and character which lie at the foundation of his tendencies. He looks to the culture of his own nation; and, in the literary productions of other countries, which he wishes to make known to his contemporaries, pays less attention to art and genius than to the moral elevation which can be attained through such works."

"Yes," said Goethe, "the temper in which he works is always admirable. What an earnest man he is! and how he has studied us Germans! He is almost more at home in our literature than ourselves. We can by no means vie with him by our researches in English literature."

"The article," said I, "is written with a fire and expression which show how many prejudices and contradictions he has to contend with in England. 'Wilhelm Meister' seems to have been placed in an unfavorable light, by malevolent critics and bad translators. Carlyle treats them with great tact. To the stupid prejudice that no pure-minded woman could

read 'Wilhelm Meister,' he opposes, very quietly, the example of the late Queen of Prussia, who made the book her familiar companion, and who was rightly esteemed one of the noblest women of her day."

Some of the guests came in now, whom Goethe received. He then turned to me again, and I continued.

"Carlyle has studied that work till he is so penetrated with its merit that he would gladly bestow similar profit and pleasure on every cultivated mind."

Goethe drew me to a window to answer me.

"Dear child," said he, "I will confide to you something which may be of use to you all your life, and in many ways. *My works can never be popular.* He who thinks and strives to make them so is in an error. They are not written for the multitude, but only for individual men whose pursuits and aims are like my own."

He wished to say more; but a young lady came up, and drew him into conversation. Soon after, we sat down to table.

I could pay no attention to the conversation that was going on, for I was wholly occupied in thinking over those words of Goethe's.

"Really," thought I, "a writer like him, of so high an intellect, so wide a nature, how can he be popular? Only a small part of him can be popular. Those songs, which convivial companies or enamored maidens sing, are as if they were not for other beings.

"And, rightly regarded, is not this the case with every thing extraordinary? Is Mozart, is Raphael

popular? and does not the world conduct towards these great fountains of spiritual life like travellers who merely sip a little as they pass?

"Yes; he is right. His works are only destined for individuals. They are for contemplative natures, who wish to penetrate into the depths, and try all the paths of the world and human nature. They are for those susceptible of passionate enjoyment, who seek in the poet the bliss and woe of the heart. They are for the young poet, who wishes to learn how to express his feelings, and how to treat his subject according to the rules of art. They are for critics, who find there a model, not only for the best rules of judgment, but for the best means of making a criticism interesting and attractive.

"His works are for the artist, whose mind they enlighten as to general principles, and whom they teach what subjects are suited to works of art; what he should use, and what leave aside. They are for the observer of nature, not only because great laws are discovered and taught him, but, still more, as teaching a method by which the intellect may best persuade Nature to reveal her mysteries.

"All those who are engaged in science or art, may be guests at his richly-provided table, and in their works show plainly that they have drawn from a great general source of light and life."

Such thoughts were in my head all dinner-time. I thought of individuals, of many excellent German artists, natural philosophers, poets, and critics, who owed to Goethe great part of their culture. I thought of intellectual Italians, Frenchmen, and Englishmen,

who have their eyes upon him, and who have followed his lead.

All around me were jesting and talking, or partaking of the good fare. I spoke now and then a word, but without exactly knowing what I said. A lady put a question to me, to which I did not render a very appropriate answer; and they all laughed at me.

"Let him alone," said Goethe. "He is always absent, except when he is at the theatre."

They laughed at me again; but I did not regard it. I felt myself, to-day, peculiarly happy. I blessed my fate, which, after many singular transitions, had associated me with the small circle who enjoy the conversation and intimacy of a man whose greatness I had deeply felt only a few moments since, and whom I now had before my eyes, in all the loveliness of his personal presence.

Biscuit, and some very fine grapes, were brought for dessert. The last came from a distance, and Goethe made a mystery of from whence. He offered me some of the ripest.

"Here, my good friend," said he, "eat these sweets, and much good may they do you."

I highly enjoyed the grapes from Goethe's hand, drawing near him now both in body and soul.

They talked of the theatre, and of Wolff's great merit.

"Our earlier actors," said Goethe, "learned much from me, but I can properly call none but Wolff my pupil. I will give you a little instance how thoroughly he was penetrated with my principles, and how fully he acted out my thought. I was once very angry with Wolff, for various reasons. He played one evening,

and I sat in my box. 'Now,' thought I, 'thou wilt be able to spy out his faults; for there is not to-day, in thy heart, one trace of affection which might speak for him and excuse him.' He played, and I never turned my sharpened eye from him; but how he played! how secure, how firm he was! I could not find in him the shadow of a fault, according to the rules which I had given him; and I could not refuse to be good to him again."

Monday, 20th October.

Oberbergrath Noeggerath, from Bonn, returning from the assembly of natural philosophers, was to-day a very welcome guest at Goethe's table. Mineralogy was the principal topic of conversation, and this worthy stranger gave us many valuable particulars as to that in the neighborhood of Bonn.

After dinner, we went into the room where the colossal bust of Juno is. Goethe showed his guests a long slip of paper, with outlines of the friezes of Phigalia. Looking at these outlines we observed that the Greeks represented animals less from an observation of nature than from conformity with certain fixed rules. We found those days inferior to our own in subjects of this sort; and that the goats, oxen, and horses, frequently found on bass-reliefs, are usually very stiff, ill formed, and imperfect creatures.

"I will not quarrel with you about that," said Goethe; "but, first of all, we should decide to what era and what artists such works belong; for I could instance a multitude of masterpieces, where Grecian artists, in their representation of animals, not only

equalled, but, indeed, surpassed nature. The English, who understand horses better than any nation in the world, have acknowledged that two antique heads of horses are more perfect in their forms than those of any race now existing upon earth.

"These works are from the best era of Greece, and, while we are astonished at their beauty, we should not so much infer that these artists have copied from finer models than we now possess, as that they themselves had advantages in their time and in their culture, by which they improved on the manifestations of nature."

While all this was said, I stood a little way off, looking at engravings, with a lady, at one of the tables, and could only, as it were, lend half an ear to Goethe's words; but so much the deeper did they sink into my mind.

After the company had gone, I approached Goethe, who stood by the stove.

"Your excellency," said I, "said, a little while ago, that the Greeks exalted nature by the greatness of their minds, and I think that we cannot be too deeply penetrated with the truth of this maxim."

"Yes, my good friend," said Goethe, "all depends upon this; one must *be* something, in order to *make* something. Dante seems to us great; but he had the culture of centuries behind him. The house of Rothschild is rich; but it has taken more than one century to accumulate such treasures. All these things lie deeper than is thought.

"Our good artists, who imitate the old German school, begin, while weak as men, and uninformed

as artists, to copy from nature, and think they become something. They stand *beneath* nature. But he who wishes to do any thing great, must be, like the Greeks, so highly cultivated that he will know how to raise up the realities of nature to the height of his own mind; and to realize that, which, in nature, whether from internal weakness or external hinderance, has remained an intention merely."

Wednesday, 22d October.

To-day at table we talked of women; and Goethe said, "Women are the silver dishes, in which we place golden apples. My idea of woman is not abstracted from what I have seen in real life, but rather inborn. At any rate, it arose in me, I know not how. Accordingly, the characters of women in my works have all been successful. They are all better than they could be found in real life."

Tuesday, 18th November.

Goethe spoke of a new article in the "Edinburgh Review."

"It is delightful," said he, "to see the ability of the English critics. Very fine properties have taken place of the early pedantry. In an article on German literature in this number, you find the following remark: —

"'There are people among the poets who are always inclined to select such subjects as are really abhorrent to other minds.'

"How many of our late literati are here characterized by a single stroke!"

Tuesday, 16th December.

I dined to-day with Goethe alone, in his work-room. We talked on various literary topics.

"The Germans," said he, "cannot cease to be Philistines. They keep quarrelling about some verses, which are printed both in Schiller's works and mine, as if it were of any importance to ascertain which of us really wrote them. Friends, such as we were, intimate for years, having the same interests, in habits of daily intercourse, and under reciprocal obligations, live so truly into one another, that it is hardly possible to decide whether single thoughts belong to the one or the other.

"We have made many couplets together; sometimes I gave the thought, and Schiller made the verse; sometimes the reverse was the case; sometimes he made one line, and I the other. Who, but a Philistine, would care to settle the mine and thine?"

"Something similar," said I, "often happens in the literary world, when people doubt the originality of this or that celebrated man, and seek to trace out the sources from whence he obtained his riches."

"How absurd!" said Goethe; "we might as well inquire, when we see a strong man, about the oxen, sheep, and swine, which he has eaten, and which have contributed to his strength.

"We have, indeed, faculties to begin with; but, for unfolding them, we may thank a thousand influences of the great world, from which we appropriate what we can and what is suitable to us. I owe much to the Greeks and French; I am infinitely indebted to Shakspeare, Sterne, and Goldsmith; but, in saying

this, I have not pointed out all the sources of my culture; that would be an endless, as well as an unnecessary task. What is important is to have a soul which loves truth, and receives it wherever it can find it.

"The world is now so old, so many worthy men have lived and thought, that there is little new to be discovered or expressed. My theory of colors is not entirely new. Plato, Leonardo da Vinci, and many other fine minds, have made similar observations; my merit is to have re-discovered, and in a confused world spoken out once more the truth."

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Of Voltaire I said I had yet read but a small portion of his writings; for his little poems to persons charmed me so much that I could not leave reading them.

"Indeed," said Goethe, "all is good which is done by so great a genius as Voltaire; only his mockeries and irreverence I cannot excuse. But you are quite right to give so much time to those little poems; they are among the most charming of his works. Every line is rich in thought, clear, bright, and attractive."

"And we see there with pleasure," said I, "the grace and ease with which he sustained his relations to persons of such dignified rank and station."

"Yes," said Goethe, "he bore himself like a nobleman. And with all his irreverence, he always kept within the limits of strict propriety. The Empress of Austria has observed to me repeatedly,

that there is no passage in these poems of Voltaire's in which he trespasses against etiquette."

"Does your excellency," said I, "remember the poem in which he makes to the Princess of Prussia, afterwards Queen of Sweden, such a pretty declaration of love, while he says that he dreamed of being elevated to the royal dignity?"

"It is one of his best," said Goethe, and he recited the lines —

"'*Je vous aimais, princesse, et j'osais vous le dire;*
Les Dieux à mon reveil ne m'ont pas tout oté,
Je n'ai perdu que mon empire.'

"How pretty it is! And never did poet have his talent so completely at command as Voltaire. I remember an anecdote of a time when he had been visiting Madame Du Chatelet. Just as he was going away, and the carriage had even driven up to the door, he received a letter from the young girls of a neighboring convent, who wished to play the 'Death of Julius Cæsar,' on the birth-day of their abbess, and begged him to write them a prologue. The request was too politely made to be refused; so he called for pen and paper, and wrote the prologue, standing, upon the mantel-piece. It is a piece of perhaps twenty verses; the thoughts well arranged, the style finished, perfectly suited to the occasion, enough, and of the best sort."

"I shall be very desirous to read it," said I.

"I doubt," said Goethe, "whether you will find it

in your collection of his works; it has only of late been published, — he wrote hundreds of such poems, — and many, probably, still lie hidden in the possession of individuals."

I mentioned reading, to-day, a passage in Lord Byron, which showed how much he admired Voltaire.

"Byron," said Goethe, "knew well where any thing good was to be got, and was too wise to neglect this great source of light."

Goethe then repeated some observations which he had formerly made upon Byron.

"I entirely agree with your excellency," said I; "but, however great the genius of this poet, I must doubt whether the interests of human culture be profited by his writings."

"I think otherwise," said Goethe. "His fearlessness and majesty must cultivate those who admire them. We must be careful not to confine ourselves too narrowly to what is moral and decorous. All greatness helps him who is able to apprehend it."

Wednesday, 4th February, 1829.

"I have been reading Schubart," said Goethe. "He is a valuable man, and says many excellent things, if we can but translate them into our own language. His book is chiefly intended to prove that there is a stand-point without philosophy — that of the healthy human understanding; and that art and science have always thriven best independent of philosophy, by the free working of man's natural faculties.

"This is water for our mill. For my part, I have

always kept aloof from philosophy. The stand-point of the natural human understanding was the one I preferred; and Schubart confirms the wisdom of what I have been saying and doing all my life.

"I have but one fault to find with him, and this is, that he knows better than he will confess on some subjects, and does not show himself perfectly sincere. Like Hegel, he would interweave the Christian religion with philosophy, where they have nothing to do with one another. Christianity has a might of its own, lifting up, from time to time, dejected, suffering humanity, and in this rises above all philosophy, and needs no support therefrom. Neither does the philosopher need the support of religion to prove certain doctrines; for instance, that existence is prolonged into eternity. Man must believe in immortality; this belief corresponds with the wants of his nature. But, if the philosopher tries to prove the immortality of his soul from a legend, that is very weak, and says little to us. To me, the eternal existence of my soul is proved, from my need of activity; if I work incessantly till my death, nature is pledged to give me another form of being when the present can no longer sustain my spirit."

My heart beat, at these words, with admiration and love.

"Never," thought I, "was doctrine spoken more likely to incite to noble deeds than this. Who would not work and act indefatigably on to the end of his days, if, by so doing, he obtained the surety of an eternal life?"

Goethe had a portfolio brought, full of drawings and engravings. After we had looked at some leaves in silence, he showed me one from a picture of Ostade's.

"Here," said he, "you have the scene of our good man and good wife."

I looked at the engraving with much pleasure. I saw the interior of a peasant's dwelling, — kitchen, parlor, and bed-room, all in one. Man and wife sat opposite one another; the wife spinning, the husband winding yarn; a child at their feet. In the back-ground was a bed, and very rude household furniture and utensils. The door led at once into the open air. This picture gave perfectly the idea of a happy marriage in a very limited condition; satisfaction, content, and the luxury of wedded love, were expressed in the faces of both man and wife, as they looked upon one another.

"One feels happier," said I, "the longer he looks at this picture; it has a quite peculiar charm."

"It is sensuous," said Goethe; "and, in this respect, higher efforts often are wanting. In works of this kind, the senses must be moved, or they are nothing. In those of a higher ideal tendency, this is often lost sight of, and the work becomes dry and cold. The time of life has great influence here, and the artist should be careful to remember his age in choosing his subject. I succeeded in my 'Iphigenia,' and 'Tasso,' because I had yet enough of youthful ardor to penetrate and animate the ideal of the stuff into sensuous life. Now, I could not

manage so ideal subjects, and must choose those where a part of the work is already done for me."

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He spoke of the great mistake made by those who think, because a fact is interesting in itself, it must afford an interesting subject for the stage: —

"To write for the theatre is a profession which the dramatist must learn, and a talent which he must possess. Both are rare, and if either be wanting, little good can be done."

Monday, 9th February.

Goethe talked of the *Wahlverwandtschaften*. He said that a person supposed the character of Miller to be meant for him, though he (Goethe) had never seen or known him.

"It must," said he, "be a character true to nature, and have existed more than once in the world. Every line in that book is taken from my intimate knowledge of life; and there is more in it than can be gathered from a first reading."

Tuesday, 10th February.

Goethe talked of Merck; of the state of culture in Germany at the time of their acquaintance, and how difficult it was to emerge from the so called storm and stress period (*Sturm und Drang-periode*) to a higher mode of thought; of his first years in Weimar; the poetic talent in conflict with reality, which he, from his connection with the Court, and the various sorts of service demanded of him, is, for his own

advantage, obliged to encounter; thence nothing poetical of importance produced during those ten years; saddened by love affairs; the father always impatient of his court life.

The advantage — that he did not change his place of abode, and was not obliged twice to go through the same experience.

He fled to Italy in order to revive his poetic power. Superstitious fancy, that he should not succeed, if any one knew about it; therefore observes profound secrecy. Writes to the Grand Duke from Rome. Returns from Italy with great requisitions upon himself.

Duchess Amelia — a perfect Princess, with perfectly natural, human sense and enjoyment of life. She was very fond of Goethe's mother, and would fain have had her at Weimar, but he opposed it.

About "Faust." — "'Faust' sprang up at the same time with 'Werther.' I brought it with me, written out on letter-paper, and not an erasure in the manuscript, for I took care not to write down a line that was not worthy to remain."

Wednesday, 11th February.

Oberbau-Director Coudray dined with me at Goethe's house. He spoke of the Female Industry School and the Orphan's Institute, as the best establishments in their kind of this country. The first was founded by the Grand Duchess; the last by the Grand Duke, Carl August. Much was said, both of the art of theatrical decorations, and of road-making. Coudray

showed Goethe a sketch for a prince's chapel. Goethe made an objection, to which Coudray yielded.

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Thursday, 12th February.

Goethe read me the lately-composed noble poem, *Kein Wesen kann zu nichts zerfallen.*

"I wrote it," said he, "in contradiction to my lines —

> *'Denn alles muss zu nichts zerfallen*
> *Wenn es im seyn beharren will,' &c.;*
>
> 'All must ever keep dissolving
> Would it continue still to be;'

which are stupid, and which my Berlin friends took occasion, at the late assembly of natural philosophers, to put up in golden letters, much to my vexation."

Goethe extolled the character of the great mathematician, Lagrange.

"He was a good," said he, "and even on that account, a great man. For when a good man is gifted with talent also, he works morally for the salvation of the world, as poet, philosopher, artist, or some other way.

"I am glad you had so good an opportunity yesterday of knowing Coudray. He says little in general society, but, among us, you can see his excellent mind and character. He had, at first, many contradictions to encounter, but has fought through them all, and enjoys now the entire confidence and favor of the court. He is one of the

most skilful architects of our time. He has always relied on me, and I on him. We have been useful to one another. If I could but have known him fifty years ago!"

I asked if Goethe had not learned much in Italy about architecture.

"I got the idea of earnestness and greatness," said he, "but no skill in application. Building the castle here in Weimar helped me more than any thing. I assisted and even made drawings for it. I was, at least in design, superior to the professional people."

We talked of Zelter.

"I have," said Goethe, "just received a letter from him, in which he complains that his attempt to give the oratorio of the Messiah was frustrated by the weak, sentimental singing of one of his female scholars. This weakness is characteristic of our age. My hypothesis is, that this is a consequence of the great efforts made in Germany to get rid of French influence. Painters, natural philosophers, poets, musicians, with but few exceptions, show this weakness."

"Yet I hope," said I, "suitable music may be composed for 'Faust.'"

"Impossible!" said Goethe. "Those awful or repulsive elements are not in the style of the time. The music should be like that of Don Giovanni. Mozart should have composed for 'Faust.' Meyerbeer might, perhaps, do it; but he is too much engaged with the Italian theatres."

Afterwards, I do not recollect in what connection, he said —

"The great, the wise, are always in a minority. There have been ministers who were obliged to carry through their great plans with both king and people against them. Let us not dream that Reason can ever be popular. Passions, emotions, may be made popular; but Reason remains ever the property of an elect few."

Friday, 13th February.

Dined with Goethe alone.

"After I have finished the *Wanderjahre*," said he, "I shall turn to botany again, though I fear it may guide me too far about, and at last show itself as an Alp in my way. Great secrets still lie hidden; some I know; of others, have intimations. Somewhat wonderful I will to you confide and express.

"The plant goes from knot to knot, closing at last with the flower and the seed. So the tape-worm, the caterpillar, goes from knot to knot, and closes with the head. Man and the higher animals are built up through the vertebræ, the powers being concentrated in the head.

"With corporations it is the same as with individuals. The bees form a similar scale of individuals, closing and perfected in their king. How this is managed is a mystery, hard to be expressed in words, but I may say that I have my thoughts upon it.

"Thus does a nation bring forth its hero, who stands at the head, like a demigod, to protect and save. Thus were the poetic powers of the French concentrated in Voltaire. Such heads of a nation are always great in the generation for which they work. Many

have enduring life; but the majority are succeeded by others, and forgotten by after times."

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"One must grow old to have time to look into all these matters, and have money enough to pay for experience. Each *bon mot* of mine has cost a purse of gold; half a million of my own money, the fortune I inherited, my salary, and the large income derived from my writings for fifty years back, have been expended to instruct me in what I now know. I have, besides, seen a million and a half expended on great designs, by the royal personages with whom I have been so nearly connected, and in whose measures, failures, and successes I bore part.

"It is not enough to have talent: to be wise, great connections are also needed, that one may see how the cards of the time are played, and even assist oneself in winning or losing.

"Without my inquiries into natural science, I could never so well have learned man as he is. In all other pursuits it is easier to evade exposure of weakness. But Nature understands no joke; she is always true, earnest, and severe; she is always right, and all failing and error must belong to man. She disdains the inadequate; only to the adequate, true, and genuine will she reveal her mysteries.

"The Understanding can never scale such heights. Man must rise through the highest Reason, to approach the Divinity which manifests itself in the primitive phenomena, (*Urphänomenen,*) physical and moral, behind which it dwells, and which proceed from it.

"Divinity works in the living, and not in the dead;

in the becoming and changing, not in the become and changed. Therefore Reason, aspiring to the Divine, deals with the becoming, the living; but Understanding with the become, the already stiffened, which it can apply to use.

"Mineralogy is a science for the Understanding, for practical life; its subject is the dead, which cannot rise again, and gives no room for synthesis.

"The subject of Meteorology, on the contrary, is living, what we daily see working and changing; so this science supposes synthesis, only so great an accumulation of observations is needed for this, that man is not yet prepared. We steer by hypotheses, by imaginary islands; but the proper synthesis will probably remain an undiscovered country; and I do not wonder, when I see how difficult it is to obtain a synthesis about such simple things as plants and colors."

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Tuesday, 17th February.

We talked of Goethe's *Grosskophta*.

"Lavater," said Goethe, "believed in Cagliostro and his wonders. When the impostor was unmasked, Lavater maintained — 'This is another; Cagliostro, who did the wonders, was a holy person.'

"Lavater was a truly good man, but subject to strong delusions, and not to be depended on for truth; he deceived himself and others. This made a breach betwixt him and me. The last time I saw him was in Zurich; and he did not see me. I was coming in disguise down an alley; seeing him approach, I stepped

aside, and he passed without seeing me. He walked like a crane, and therefore figures as such on the Blocksberg."

I asked whether Lavater had a tendency to observe nature, as we might infer from the "Physiognomy."

"Not in the least," said Goethe. "His tendency was wholly towards the moral — the religious. That part of his book which relates to the skulls of animals, he got from me."

The conversation turned upon the French — upon the lectures of Guizot, Villemain, and Cousin. Goethe spoke with high esteem of the stand they had taken; saying that they observed every thing on a free and new side, and went straight to their aim.

"It is," said Goethe, "as if, till now, we had been forced to reach a garden through roundabout, crooked ways; and now these men have broken a door in the wall, and get at once into the broadest walk of the garden."

From Cousin we passed to the Indian philosophy.

"This philosophy," said Goethe, "has, if we may believe what the English tell us, nothing foreign, but rather repeats the epochs through which we all pass. While we are children, we are Sensualists; Idealists when we love, and attribute to the beloved object qualities which she does not possess. Love wavers; we doubt her fidelity, and are Skeptics before we think of it. The rest of life is indifferent; we let it go as it will, and end, like the Indian philosophers, with Quietism.

"In the German philosophy, there are still two great works to do. Kant did a vast deal, when he

wrote the 'Critique of Pure Reason;' but the circle is not yet complete. Now, some able man must write the 'Critique of the Senses and Understanding of Man;' and, if this could be as well done, we should have little more to wish in German philosophy.

"Hegel has written, in the 'Berlin Yearly Register,' a criticism upon Hamann, which I, of late, have read and re-read, and must highly praise. Hegel's judgments as a critic have always been excellent.

"Villemain, too, stands very high in criticism. The French will never boast another genius to equal Voltaire; but we can say of Villemain, that he is so far elevated above Voltaire by his intellectual standpoint, as to be able to judge his virtues and faults."

Wednesday, 18th February.

We talked of the *Farbenlehre*.

"The highest," said Goethe, "which man can attain in these matters, is astonishment; if the primary phenomena bring him this, let him be satisfied, and forbear to seek above or behind; for here is the limit. But men will not stop here; they are like children, who, after peeping into the mirror, turn it round to see what is on the other side."

I asked whether Merck loved natural history.

"Very much," said Goethe, "and had fine collections. He was an uncommonly many-sided man. He loved art also; and, if he saw a fine work in the hands of a Philistine who could not know how to value it, he used every means to get it for himself. In such matters he had no conscience, and would cheat in a *grandiose* style."

Goethe related some interesting anecdotes of this.

"A man like Merck," continued he, "will not again be born; or, if he be, the world will model him into a very different person. That was a good time, when Merck and I were young! German literature was yet a clean tablet, on which one could hope to paint good things with pleasure. Now, it is so scribbled over and soiled, that there is no pleasure in looking at it, and a wise man is not sure he had best make any mark upon it."

Thursday, 19th February.

Dined with Goethe *tête à tête*, in his work-room.

We talked of the alterations which Schiller had made in "Egmont," to adapt it to the stage.

"The Regent," said I, "should not have been left out. Not only does her presence impart to the whole a nobler character, but the political relations and state of the Spanish Court are brought much more clearly to view by her conversation with Machiavelli."

"Undoubtedly," said Goethe. "And then Egmont gains in dignity from the lustre which the partiality of this princess casts upon him, as also Clara seems more lovely when we see that Egmont prefers her even to princesses. These are very delicate shades, which cannot be obliterated without hurting the whole."

"Then," said I, "when Clara is alone, the male parts preponderate too much. The Regent helps balance the picture."

"You judge rightly," said Goethe. "All this I carefully weighed when I wrote the piece; and it

cannot but suffer when an important figure is taken out. But Schiller had a dash of violence in his nature, and acted often upon his preconceived idea, without due consideration of the subject of his action."

"You, perhaps, may be blamed," said I, "that you suffered him to do as he pleased in so important an affair."

"One is often more indifferent than is right," said Goethe. "I was at that time deeply engaged in other matters. I cared neither for 'Egmont' nor the theatre, and let them do as they liked. Now, I am consoled by knowing that the piece is printed as I wrote it, and that other theatres have the good taste to play it entire."

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[Here are omitted some pages on the subject of Goethe's "Theory of Colors."]

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Monday, 23d March.

"I have found, among my papers," said Goethe, "a leaf, in which I call architecture frozen music. There is something in the remark; the influence that flows upon us from architecture is like that from music.

"Magnificent buildings and apartments are for princes and empires. When a man lives in such, he feels satisfied, and asks no more.

"This is contrary to my nature. In a splendid dwelling, such as I had at Carlsbad, I become slothful. A decent little room like this in which we are —

somewhat disorderly-orderly — somewhat in the gipsy fashion — is what suits me; it leaves my inner nature free to act and create."

We talked of Schiller's letters, and how they two had daily incited one another to new activity.

"Schiller," said I, "seems to have felt an especial interest in 'Faust;' it is pleasant to see how he urges you, or, in his impetuosity, would himself continue the work according to his own idea. I perceive his nature made him precipitate."

"It did so," said Goethe, "and all men are so who lay too much stress upon an idea. He was never in repose, and could never have done; as you may see by his letters on 'Wilhelm Meister,' which he would have modelled such different ways. I had enough to do to stand my ground, and keep my works free from such influences."

"I have," said I, "been reading this morning his 'Indian Death Song,' and been delighted with it."

"You see," said Goethe, "what an artist he was, and how he could manage the objective also, when it was once before his eyes. I wish he had made a dozen such poems as that 'Indian Death Song;' it is one of his very best. And yet — can you believe it? — some of his nearest friends found fault with this poem, thinking it was not sufficiently tinctured with his Ideality. Yes, my good friend, such things one has to suffer from friends. Even so Humboldt found fault with my Dorothea, because she took up arms against the assailing soldiery. And yet, without that trait, the character of the extraordinary maiden, so proportioned

to that time and situation, would sink into common place. But the longer you live, the more you will see how few men are capable of understanding the proper law of a production: instead of taking its ground, and seeing what it should be, they praise or blame, according as it harmonizes with their own condition. These of whom I spoke were the first and best; so you may judge how much the opinion of the multitude is to be valued, and how one in fact must always stand alone.

"Had I not had some solid foundation in the plastic arts and natural science, I would scarce have kept myself upright; but this was my protection, and enabled me to aid Schiller also."

Tuesday, 24th March.

"The nobler a man is," said Goethe, "so much the more is he under the influence of demons, and he must take heed and not let his guiding will counsel him to a wrong path.

"There was something of demonology in my connection with Schiller; it might have happened earlier or later without so much significance; but that it should occur just at this time, when I had my Italian journey behind me, and Schiller began to be weary of his philosophical speculations, led to very important consequences for both."

Thursday, 2d April.

"I will discover to you," said Goethe to-day at dinner, "a political secret, which must erelong be made public. Capo d'Istria cannot long continue to

administer the affairs of Greece; he wants one requisite indispensable in that position; *he is no soldier*. There is no instance on record, in which a mere statesman has been able to organize a revolutionary state, and keep under his control the military and their leaders. With the sabre in his hand, at the head of an army, a man may command and make laws, secure of being obeyed; otherwise, the attempt is hazardous. Napoleon, if he had not been a soldier, could never have attained the highest power; and Capo d'Istria will soon be forced to play a secondary part. I tell you this beforehand, and you will see it come. It lies in the nature of things, and must happen so."

We talked again of the French, especially Cousin, Villemain, and Guizot.

"These men," said he, "look into, through, and round a subject, with great success. They combine perfect knowledge of the past with the spirit of this nineteenth century; and the result is wonderful."

We then talked of the late French poets, and of the terms "classic" and "romantic."

"I," said Goethe, "should define the classic by the word *healthy*, the romantic by the word *sickly*. In this sense, the *Nibelungenlied* is as much a classic as the *Iliad*, being equally vigorous and healthy. Most modern productions are not romantic because they are new, but because they are weak, morbid, and sickly; and the old are not classics because they are old, but because they are strong, fresh, healthy, and cheerful. If we make this distinction between 'classic' and 'romantic,' it will be easy to see our way clearly."

The conversation turning upon the imprisonment of Beranger —

"He is rightly served," said Goethe. "His late poems are really immodest and disorderly; and he has deserved punishment from king, state, and all peaceful citizens. His early poems were cheerful and harmless, well adapted to make a circle of human beings gay and happy, which is the best that can be said of songs."

"I am sure," said I, "that he has been injured by the society in which he lives, and has said, to please his revolutionary friends, many things which he otherwise would not have said. Your excellency should fulfil your intention of writing a chapter on influences. The more I think on that subject, the richer and more important it seems."

"It is only too rich," said Goethe; "for in truth all is influence, except in so far as we ourselves are it."

"But we can examine," said I, "what influences are injurious, and what beneficial, to our natures."

"That is the difficult point," said Goethe, "to decide how far it is best to keep fast hold on our natures, and allow the demons no more power than is right."

After dinner, Goethe had a laurel, in full flower, and a Japanese plant, placed before us on the table. I remarked what different feelings were excited by these two plants; that the sight of the laurel was calculated to produce a mild, serene, cheerful mood — that of the Japanese plant, one of barbaric melancholy.

"You are right," said Goethe; "and great power over the mind of man has been conceded to the vegetable world which surrounds him. Surely, he who passes his life amid solemn, lofty oaks, must be a different man from him who lives among the airy birches. Yet we must remember that men, in general, have not cultivated sensibilities like us, and live away busily, without being so much affected by such impressions. Nevertheless, this much is certain: not only the inborn peculiarities of a race, but soil and climate, aliment and occupations, combine to form the character of a people. Also, we must remember that the primitive races took possession of such countries as pleased them; so that the characteristics of the country were originally in harmony with those of its inhabitants."

"Look upon the desk," continued Goethe; "there is a paper which I wish you to look at."

"This blue cover?" said I.

"Yes," he replied. "Now, what do you say to that hand-writing? Is it not that of a man who felt himself noble and free, as he wrote? Whose do you think it is?"

I looked at the paper with partiality.

"It is indeed free and *grandiose*," said I. "Merck might have written so."

"No," said Goethe; "he was not sufficiently noble and positive. It is from Zelter. Pen and paper were favorable on this occasion; so that the writing is happily expressive of his noble character. I shall put that paper into my collection of autographs."

Friday, 3d April.

Dined with Coudray at Goethe's house. We talked of the new staircase now making in the ducal palace, and also of laying out the roads.

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Coudray showed Goethe the instructions which he had been drawing up for a young architect, whom the Board for overseeing the buildings here are about sending to Paris, that he may become more instructed in his art. Goethe approved them. Goethe had obtained the money from the Ministry for the young man, and they were now planning how he could get most profit from its use. On his return, they thought of making him a teacher in the workman's school soon to be established, which could not fail to give an opportunity to use his talents, and thus open to himself a proper sphere of action. The plan was good, and I gave it my blessing in silence.

They then examined Schinkel's plans, with which Coudray was pleased.

They talked of sound, and how to avoid it, and of the great strength and firmness of the buildings of the Jesuits.

"In Messina," said Goethe, "when all other buildings were shaken to pieces by the earthquake, the church and cloister of the Jesuits remained as undefaced as if they had been built the day before. It could not be seen that the earthquake had produced the slightest impression upon them."

From the Jesuits we were led to speak of the Catholics, and their emancipation in Ireland.

"This measure," said Coudray, "may be agreed to, but with so many clauses and restrictions on the part of Parliament, that it cannot be dangerous to England."

"All preventive measures," said Goethe, "are ineffectual in dealing with Catholics. The Papal see has interests and means silently to subserve them, of which we never dream. If I were a member of Parliament, I would not hinder emancipation; but I would have inserted in the protocol, that when the first distinguished Protestant head should fall by a Catholic vote, I wished them to remember me."

Speaking again of Cousin, Villemain, and Guizot, Goethe said —

"Instead of the light, superficial treatment of Voltaire, they display an erudition, such as, in earlier days, was unknown out of Germany. And such intellect! such searching and pressing out of the subject! superb! It is as if they trod the wine-press. All three are excellent, but Guizot is my favorite."

Speaking on topics of universal history, Goethe said —

"A great ruler needs no means to make him popular other than his greatness. If he has striven and worked to make his realm happy at home, and honored abroad, it matters not whether he ride about in a state coach, dressed in all his orders, or in a bearskin, with his cigar in his mouth, on a miserable *droska* He is sure of love and esteem from his people.

"But, if a prince has not this real weight and personal dignity, he had best betake himself to religion, and a sympathy with the customs of his

people. To appear at church every Sunday; to look down upon, and let himself be looked at by the common people, is the best means of becoming popular which can be recommended to a young sovereign, and one which Napoleon, at the height of his greatness, did not disdain."

Speaking again of the Catholics, it was remarked how great the influence of the ecclesiastics is, though used in silence. It was observed that a young writer of Henault having of late made merry with the rosary in a periodical which he edited, the paper was immediately bought up through the influence of the priests in their dioceses.

"An Italian translation of my 'Werther,'" said Goethe, "appeared at Milan. Not a single copy of it was to be had a very short time after. The bishop had bought up the whole edition. I was not vexed, but pleased by the sagacity he showed in seeing that 'Werther' was a bad book for the Catholics, and in taking such effective measures quietly to suppress it."

Sunday, 5th April.

Goethe said he had driven out to Belvidere this morning, to look at Coudray's new staircase, and was much pleased with it; also that a great petrified log had been sent him, which he should like to show me.

"Such petrified trunks," said he, "are found about the fifty-first degree, here and in America, round about the earth like a girdle. With all these wonders, we have no idea of the early organization of the earth, and I cannot blame Herr von Buch for trying to

spread his theory. He knows nothing; but nobody knows more, and it is something to have even a plausible appearance of reason on such subjects."

This morning he read me the little poem —

"*Cupido, loser, eigensinniger Knabe.*"

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He spoke of a lately-published book about Napoleon, written by one who had known that hero in his youth.

"It is a dry book," said he, "written without any enthusiasm; but it shows how grand the truth would seem, if it were properly told."

He spoke of a tragedy by one of our young writers, as "a pathological product," and said —

"The juices are not advantageously distributed. The subject is good; but I did not find the scenes which I looked for, while others, which I did not expect, are worked out with love and diligence. It is pathological or romantic, according to our late definition."

We had more pleasant chat, and Goethe entertained me with honey and some dates.

Monday, 6th April.

Goethe gave me a letter from Egon Ebert, which I read with pleasure. We said much in praise of Ebert, and of Bohemia, remembering also Professor Zauper with love.

"Bohemia is a peculiar country," said Goethe, "and was always a favorite of mine. The culture of the Bohemian literati retains more clearness and purity

than that of Northern Germany. Here every dunce writes, without any regard to moral basis or high views."

Goethe spoke of Ebert's lately-written epic, and of the female rule of early days in Bohemia, whence comes the Saga of the Amazons; also, of the epic of another poet, who has taken great pains to get favorable notices of his work from the newspapers.

"Such notices," said Goethe, "did appear here and there. Then comes the 'Halle Literary Gazette,' and tells the exact truth about the poem, and nullifies all that the others had done for it. Truth will out now-a-days; the public cannot any longer be imposed upon."

"I wonder," said I, "that a man can care enough for a little fame, to stoop to falsities to obtain it."

"Dear child," said Goethe, "fame is no despicable matter. Napoleon, for the sake of a great name, broke in pieces almost half a world."

He told me more of the new book about Napoleon, adding —

"The power of truth is great. Each cloud, each illusion which historians, journalists, and poets have conjured up about Napoleon, vanishes before the terrible reality of this book; but the hero looks no less than before; rather he grows in stature as we see him more truly."

"His personal influence," said I, "must have been magical, that men would suffer themselves to be so drawn to him, and wholly governed by him."

"Certainly," said Goethe, "his personal influence was great. Yet the chief reason was, that men under him were sure of attaining their object. They were

drawn towards him, as they always are to him who gives them this certainty, as actors are towards the manager, on whom they can depend to assign them good parts. 'Tis an old story constantly repeated; for human nature is so constituted that no man serves another disinterestedly, but does it willingly, if thereby he can also serve himself. Napoleon knew men well; he knew how to make proper use of their weaknesses."

The conversation turned upon Zelter.

"You know," said Goethe, "that Zelter has received the Prussian Order. But he has no coat of arms, yet, from his large family, may hope a continuance of his name. I have taken the whim to make him a coat of arms. Here it is on paper."

The arms looked very stately, and I could not but praise the invention. In the lower field were the battlements of a city wall, intimating that Zelter had been, in early days, a skilful mason. Thence rises a winged horse, indicating his genius and aspirations. Above was a lyre, over which shone a star, symbol of the art by which the excellent friend, under the influence and protection of favoring stars, had won his fame. Beneath was annexed the Order which his king, in recognition of his great merits, had bestowed upon him.

"I have had an engraving made from it by Facius," said Goethe, "which you shall see. Is it not pleasant to make a coat of arms for a friend, and thus, as it were, bestow nobility upon him?"

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We spoke of the poem "*Cupido, loser,*" &c. I

observed it made upon me the impression of a Flemish picture.

"Yet it could not be painted," said Goethe.

"It is," said I, "a fine instance of poetry verging as nearly on painting as is possible, without going out of its own sphere. Such poems are to me the dearest; inspiring both contemplation and feeling. But I hardly understand how you could obtain the feeling of such a situation; the poem is as if from another time and another world."

"I could not," said Goethe, "have written such another, and know not how it came to me, as often happens about such matters."

"One peculiarity of this poem," said I, "is, that it produces the effect of rhyme, though it is not in rhyme. Why is this?"

"'Tis the rhythm," he replied. "The lines, beginning with an accented syllable, proceed in trochees till the dactyle near the close, which gives them a sad, bewailing character."

He took a pencil, and divided the line —

"*Vŏn | mēinĕm | brēitĕn | Lāgĕr | bin ĭch vĕr | trĭebĕn.*"

We then talked of rhythm in general, and came to the conclusion that no certain rules can be laid down upon the subject.

"The measure," said Goethe, "flows spontaneously from the mood of the poet. All would be spoiled if he thought about it while writing the poem."

He spoke again of Guizot —

"I am going on with his Lectures, and continue to

find them excellent. I know no historian more profound or more penetrating. For instance, what influence certain religious opinions, such as those upon grace and good works, have had upon certain epochs, is shown us with the utmost clearness; also, the enduring life of Roman law, which, like a diving duck, would hide itself from time to time, but was never quite lost, and sure to reappear, is well set forth; on which occasion, we may again thank our excellent Savigny.

"I was particularly struck by what he says of the Germans, in speaking of the influence which other nations exercised on his in former times.

"'The Germans,' says he, 'brought us the idea of personal freedom, which was possessed by that nation more than any other.'

"Is not that good? He is perfectly right; and it is this idea which works upon us still. The Reformation is as much attributable to this cause as the *Burschen* conspiracy on the Wartburg — wise as well as foolish enterprises. The motley hues of our literature; the thirst of our poets for originality, and the belief of each one that he must strike out a new path; the separation and isolation observable among our learned men, each one standing by himself, and drawing out his thread from a point of his own, — all this comes from one source.

"The French and English keep more together, and modify one another's tendencies far more. They harmonize in dress and manners; indeed, fear to differ widely from one another, lest there should be some-

thing to excite ridicule. The German never thinks of others, but suits himself; and from this love of personal freedom comes indeed much that is excellent, but also much absurdity."

Tuesday, 7th April.

I found Hofrath Meyer, who has been ill of late, at table with Goethe to-day, and was rejoiced to see him so much better. They spoke of things relating to art, — of Peel, who has of late established himself in Meyer's good graces by giving four thousand pounds for a Claude Lorraine.

The newspapers were brought, and the question of emancipation in Ireland came up again.

"It is instructive," said Goethe, "to see how things come up on this occasion, whose existence was not suspected, and would never have been spoken of, but for the present crisis. We cannot get a clear notion of the present state of Ireland; the materials are too much entangled. But this we can see, that she suffers from evils which will not be removed by emancipation. If it has been unfortunate that Ireland must endure those evils alone, it is now unfortunate that England is engaged with her. Then, no confidence can be put in the Catholics. We see with what difficulty the two million of Protestants have kept their ground hitherto against the five million of Catholics; how, for instance, the Protestant farmer has been pressed, tricked, and tormented by his Catholic neighbors. The Catholics, though they do not agree among themselves, will always unite against a Protestant. They are like

a pack of hounds, who will be biting one another until a stag comes in view, when they all unite to run it down."

From Ireland we passed to the affairs of Turkey. Surprise was expressed that the great power of Russia did not effect more in the late campaign.

"The means provided," said Goethe, "were inadequate, and therefore overgreat requisitions were made upon individuals; this produced great deeds and individual sacrifices, but which were of little avail to the cause."

"It may be," said Meyer, "that the locality presents peculiar difficulties. We see, in the earliest times, that, if an enemy attempted to enter any where on that side, from the Danube to the northern mountains, he always encountered the most obstinate resistance, and almost invariably failed. Could the Russians only keep the sea-side open, and furnish themselves with stores in that way!"

"That may be done yet," said Goethe. "I am reading Napoleon's campaign in Egypt. What is related by his every-day companion, Bourrienne, destroys the romantic cast of many scenes, and displays the facts in naked and sublime truth. It is evident that he went upon this expedition merely to fill out an epoch when he could not be doing any thing in France to pave his way to supreme power. He was at first undecided what to do; he visited all the harbors on the Atlantic coast, to inspect the fleets, and see whether an expedition against England were practicable. He found it was not, and then decided on going to Egypt."

"It is surprising," said I, "how Napoleon, at that early age, could play with the great affairs of the world as easy and secure as if familiarized to them by many years' practice and experience."

"That, dear child," said Goethe, "is inborn with great geniuses. Napoleon managed the world as Hummel manages his harpsichord; we understand the skill of neither, though the whole is done before our eyes. Napoleon was in this especially great — that he was at all hours the same. Before and during a battle, after victory or defeat, he stood always firm, was always clear and decided what to do. He was always in his element, and equal to each situation, and each moment, just as Hummel is to an *adagio* or *allegro*, bass or treble. This facility we find wherever is real talent, in peace or war; at the harpsichord, or behind the cannon.

"We see, by this book, how many fables have been invented about the Egyptian campaign. Some anecdotes are corroborated, but most of them contradicted. It is true that he had eight hundred Turkish prisoners shot; but it was in conformity with the deliberate judgment of a council of war that nothing else could be done with them. It is *not* true that he descended into the Pyramids. He stood at ease on the outside, while others descended, and told him, on their return, what they had seen. He was not in the habit of wearing the Eastern dress. He put it on once at home, and wore it among his followers, to see how he liked it. But the turban does not suit such long heads, and he laid it aside.

"He really visited those sick of the plague, and,

indeed, in order to prove that the man who could vanquish fear, was proof against the plague also. And he was right! I could instance a similar passage in my own life, where I was exposed to infection from putrid fever, and warded it off by force of will. It is incredible what power the moral will has in such cases. It penetrates, as it were, the body, and puts it into a state of activity which repels all hurtful influences. Fear, on the other hand, induces a state of indolent weakness and susceptibility, which makes it easy for the foe to take possession of us. This Napoleon knew well, and he felt that he risked nothing in setting his army an example so imposing."

"But," continued he, gayly, "pay your respects. See what book Napoleon carried in his field library — my 'Werther!'"

"He showed at Erfurt," said I, "how faithfully he had studied it."

"He had studied it as the judge does his Acts," said Goethe, "and talked with me conformably about it. Bourrienne gives a list of the books which Napoleon took to Egypt, among which is 'Werther.' What is worth noticing in this list, is the manner in which the works are classed, under different rubrics. Under the head *Politique* we find mentioned the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Koran; from which we may judge what Napoleon's view was on religious matters."

He told us many other interesting passages from the book. Among others, we talked of Napoleon's passing with his army through the narrow part of the Red Sea, at time of ebb; but that the flood returned before they had got through, so that the last men waded up

to their waists in water, and had like to have come to the same end as Pharaoh's followers. This led Goethe to speak of the rise of the flood. He compared it with that of the clouds, which come not from afar, but arise at once in various parts, and pass off in the same manner.

Wednesday, 8th April.

Goethe received me with a cheerful air.

"From whence, and from whom, think you," said he, "I have received a letter? From Rome — from the King of Bavaria."

"I sympathize in the pleasure you feel," said I. "And is it not odd? Not an hour since, during my walk, I had many thoughts about the King of Bavaria; and now I receive this pleasant intelligence from you."

"Our minds often give us intimations of that sort," said Goethe. "Here is the letter; sit down and read it."

I took the letter, Goethe the newspaper, and I read undisturbed the royal words. The letter was dated Rome, 26th March, 1829; written in a very legible and dignified hand. The King told Goethe that he had bought an estate in Rome, the Villa di Malta, with the adjacent gardens in the neighborhood of the Villa Ludovisi, in the north-west part of the city. It stands upon a hill, which gives him a full view over all Rome, and towards the north-east of St. Peter's.

"It is a prospect," he writes, "to enjoy which one would travel a long way, and which I have at my command every hour, from the windows of my house."

He goes on to express his joy at being so advantageously settled in Rome.

"I had not," he continues, "seen Rome for twelve years, and longed for it with the impatience of a lover; but now I shall be able to return with that feeling of tranquil happiness with which one visits a beloved friend."

He spoke of the magnificent treasures of art, and the edifices, with the animation of a connoisseur who has at heart the interests of the truly beautiful, and who keenly feels every sin against good taste. The letter throughout had a beautiful humanity of feeling and expression, such as we do not ordinarily expect from persons of so high rank. I mentioned this to Goethe.

"You see in it," he replied, "a monarch whose royal dignity has not destroyed the beautiful feelings natural to him as a man — a rare phenomenon, and to be rejoiced at when seen."

I read other fine passages from the letter.

"Here in Rome," he writes, "I refresh myself after the cares of a throne; Art, Nature, are my daily delight; artists are my table companions."

He mentions how often he thinks of Goethe, in passing by the house where he once lived. Some passages were quoted from the Romish elegies, which showed that the King treasures them in his memory, and probably reads them again on the spot where they were written.

"He loves those elegies," said Goethe, "and has teazed me much to know how far they are matter of fact; because those poems have so attractive an

air, it seems as if there must be something in the incidents. Few people can realize that the poet is usually prompted to his highest efforts by slight occasions.

"I wish," continued he, "that I had the King's poems by me, that I might allude to them in my answer. I should think they were good, to judge from the little I have read. In form and mode of treatment he resembles Schiller, and, if he has put high thoughts into so fine a vase, the result must be good."

He bade the servant spread out the large engraving of Rome in the next room, that he might show me the King's villa. I felt much obliged to him. While this was doing, we talked over *Claudine von Villa Bella*, &c.; praised the music, which is by Reichardt.

"He has," said Goethe, "been especially successful with *Cupido, loser*," &c.

"This song," I remarked, "throws me into a pleasant, dreamy mood."

"It should do so," said Goethe, "for it was born of such a one."

Frederic came and told us that the engraving was ready. We went in. Goethe soon found the Villa Ludovisi, and, near it, the Villa di Malta.

"See," said he, "what a superb situation! The whole city is spread out before him, and the hill is so high, that he can see quite over the buildings towards south and east. I have often visited this villa, and enjoyed the view from the windows. Here, where the city extends out towards the north-east beyond the Tiber, you see St. Peter's and the Vatican. The long road which enters the city by the *Porta del Popolo* comes

from Germany. I lived in one of these streets near the gate, in a corner house. They show another in Rome as the place where I lived; but it is no matter: these things are, at bottom, quite indifferent, and we must let tradition take its course."

We returned into the dining-room.

"The Chancellor," said I, "would enjoy that letter."

"He shall see it," said Goethe.

"When I am reading in the Paris newspapers the debates of the Chambers, I think always how truly the Chancellor would be in his place there. Not only wisdom is required for that element, but an inclination for and a pleasure in speaking; both of which are united in our Chancellor. Napoleon liked to speak; when he had no proper opportunity, he wrote or dictated. Blucher, too, liked it; he spoke well and with emphasis; he had cultivated his talent at the theatre. Our Grand Duke liked it, though he was by nature laconic. When he could not speak, he wrote. He has prepared many laws, many treaties, generally very well; only princes have not time or quiet to obtain the necessary knowledge of details. In his later days he issued an order about paying for the restoration of pictures; and, princelike, he had made a mathematical calculation for paying by the foot. If the restored picture hold four square feet, pay four dollars; if twelve feet, twelve dollars. This was like a prince, but not like an artist; for a twelve-foot picture may be in such a state, that it can be cleaned in a day, while a four-foot picture may require a week.

But princes, like good military men, are fond of mathematical arrangements."

We talked of Art.

"I possess drawings," said he, "after pictures by Raphael and Dominichino, which called from Meyer this valuable observation: —

"'The drawings,' said Meyer, 'do not show great practice of hand; but it is evident that whoever made them had a delicate and just feeling about the pictures which lay before him, which has passed into the drawing, and brings the originals faithfully before the soul. If an artist of our day should copy these same pictures, his drawing would be more correct, and better finished; but he would probably want this true feeling of the originals, and we should not get from him, by any means, so correct or full an idea of Raphael or Dominichino.'

"Is not that good? And the same may be said of translations. Voss, for instance, has certainly made an excellent translation from Homer; yet, I am inclined to think, a more *naïve* and faithful representation of the original might have been given by one not in all respects so masterly."

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Friday, 10th April.

"While we are waiting for our soup, I will provide you with refreshment for your eyes."

With these friendly words, Goethe placed before me a volume, containing landscapes by Claude Lorraine.

I had never before seen any productions of this great master. The impression they made upon me was extraordinary; and my surprise and rapture rose with every leaf I turned over.

The power of the shadowy masses on either side, the splendid sun-light streaming from the back-ground, and its reflection in the water, producing so clear and decisive an impression, struck me like the always-recurring maxims upon art of the great masters. I also was delighted to find each picture a little world by itself, in which every part harmonized with and enhanced the ruling thought. Whether it was a harbor with vessels at anchor, active fishermen and magnificent buildings on the water's edge, or a lonely, barren hill-country, with its grazing goats, little brook and bridge, a few low bushes, and a shady tree, under which a shepherd was amusing himself with his pipe, or low moorlands with the standing pools, which, under powerful summer heat, give so pleasant an impression of coolness, — each picture was by itself, and at one with itself; no trace of any thing foreign to its element was to be seen in it.

"Here you see, for once, a complete man," said Goethe. "Beautiful were his thoughts and feelings, and in his mind lay a world, such as you will not easily find elsewhere. The pictures have the highest truth, not the truth of actual life. Claude Lorraine knew the real world by heart, but used it only as means to express the world of his fair soul. That is the true Ideality, so to use the means afforded by the actual world, that the truth evolved may at first appear to be actual too."

"Those are good words," said I, "and would apply as well to poetry as to the plastic arts."

"Even so," replied Goethe. "Meanwhile, you had better defer further enjoyment of the admirable Claude till after dinner; for the pictures are too good to look at many of them at once."

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"Here," said Goethe, "you will see in the Gazette a poem addressed to the King of Bavaria."

I read it to myself.

"What think you of it?" said he.

"They are," I replied, "the feelings of a *Dilettant*, who has more good-will than talent, and to whom the high state of literature presents language ready made, which sings and rhymes for him, while he imagines that he himself is speaking."

"You are perfectly right," said he; "I also think it a very weak production. It bears no trace of observation of any thing external; it is wholly mental, and that not in the right way."

"To write a good poem," said I, "requires great knowledge of the subject; and he who has not, like Claude Lorraine, a whole world at his command, will seldom produce any thing good."

"And then," said Goethe, "only native genius knows what is to be done, while others go blundering on their way."

"Your æsthetic teachers," said I, "are a proof of this; for scarce one of them knows what properly should be taught, and they only confuse young poets. They speak not of the Ideal, but of the Real; instead of helping the young poet to what he has not, they

confuse him about what he has. He who has from nature wit or humor, will use them to the best advantage, while scarcely conscious of possessing them. if, by these treatises, he is made conscious of his powers, they will be paralyzed."

"You are right," he replied, "and a great deal might be said on that chapter."

Speaking of the new epic of Egon Ebert, he said —

"It shows much talent, but wants the true groundwork for a poem in Reality. What he takes from observation of the external world, landscapes, sunset, and sunrise, the stars, could not be better done. But the rest, which lies in ages gone by, and belongs to the Sagas, is not painted with its proper truth; it has no pith or kernel. The Amazons, with their life and actions, are described in that general way which young people esteem poetic or romantic, and which passes for such in the æsthetic world."

"This," said I, "is the pervading fault of our present literature. Writers avoid special truths, for fear they should not be poetical, and thus fall into common place."

"Egon Ebert," said Goethe, "should have adhered strictly to the chronicles; he would then have made something of his poem. When I remember how Schiller studied tradition, what trouble he gave himself about Switzerland when he wrote his 'Tell,' and how Shakspeare used the chronicles, copying into his plays whole passages word for word, I am inclined to prescribe the same course to a young poet. I have, in my 'Clavigo,' made use of whole passages from the 'Memoirs' of Beaumarchais."

"But they are so interwoven with the rest," said I, "that the fact is not observed."

"That is well," said Goethe, "if so it be. Beaumarchais was a mad Christian, and you must read his 'Memoirs.' Lawsuits were his element, in which he felt truly at home. There are arguments from one of his lawsuits, among the boldest, most impressive, and full of talent, which have ever been known in the kind. He lost this famous lawsuit. As he was going down the stairs from the court, he met the Chancellor coming up. Beaumarchais ought to have given place; he would not, but took half the stair. The Chancellor, thinking himself insulted, commanded his people to push Beaumarchais aside, which they did. Beaumarchais immediately returned into court, and took steps to begin a process against the Chancellor, in which he came off victor."

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We talked of Goethe's "Second Residence in Rome." He said —

"I have now taken it up once more, that I may finally get rid of it, and turn my attention to something else. You know that my published Italian journey was prepared from my letters. But I cannot use those in the same way which I wrote during my second visit to Rome; they contain too much about home; about my connections in Weimar; and too little about my Italian life. Yet there are many utterances of my inward life. I think of extracting these, and inserting them in my narrative, to which they will give tone and harmony."

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"It has from olden time been said and repeated, that man should strive to know himself. To this singular requisition no man either has fully answered or shall answer. Man is by sense and custom led outwards into the world, and has a great deal to do that he may know and make use of this. He knows himself only from joy or sorrow, and is only in this way instructed what to seek, and what to shun. Man is a darkened being; he knows not whence he comes, nor whither he goes; he knows little of the world, and less of himself. I know not myself, and may God protect me from it! But this I can say, in my fortieth year, while living in Italy, I became wise enough to know thus much of myself — that I had no talent for the plastic arts, and that this tendency of mine was a false one. If I drew any thing, I had not a sufficient inclination for the corporeal. I felt a certain fear lest objects should press too much upon me; rather was I suited with the weak, the moderate. If I drew a landscape, and got well through the back- and middle-ground, I never dared making the fore-ground powerful enough; so that my pictures never produced the right impression. Then I made no progress except by practice, and was always obliged to go back, if I left off practising for a while. Yet I was not absolutely destitute of talent, and Hackert was wont to say, 'If you would stay with me eighteen months, you might do something which would give pleasure to yourself and others.'"

I listened with great interest.

"But how," said I, "can one be sure of possessing real talent for an art?"

"Real talent," said Goethe, "possesses an innate sense for form, relations, and color, so as to manage all that well with little instruction. Especially has it a sense for the corporeal, and brings it out into palpable existence, by judicious distribution of the lights. In the intervals of practice it pauses not, but grows inwardly. Such a talent is not hard to recognize, yet best recognized by a master.

"I visited the palace this morning," continued he, in a lively tone. "The apartments of the Grand Duchess are furnished with great taste; and Coudray has shown with his Italian people his fine judgment anew. The painters were still busy with the walls; they are two Milanese. I spoke Italian with them, and was glad to see that I had not lost the power. The language brings back, as it were, the atmosphere of the country."

After dinner, he sent for a small plan of Rome.

"Rome," said he, "would not do for the permanent abode of people like us. He who would settle there must marry and turn Catholic, else would he lead an uncomfortable life. Hackert is not a little proud of having lived there so long a Protestant."

He showed me the Villa Farnese.

"Was not," said I, "the witch scene, in 'Faust,' written in those gardens?"

"No," he replied, "in the Borghese gardens."

I now refreshed myself with more landscapes by Claude.

"Could not now a young artist," said I, "model himself on this great master?"

"He whose mind is cast in a like mould," answered

Goethe, "would, without doubt, best unfold himself on Claude Lorraine. But he whom nature did not so endow will at best know only particulars of this great master, and make use of him by way of phrase."

Saturday, 11th April.

I found the table set to-day in the long hall, with covers for many persons. Goethe and Frau von Goethe received me with great cordiality. One by one entered — Madame Schopenhauer, young Count Reinhard of the French embassy, his brother-in-law, Von D——, passing through to enter the Russian army against the Turks, Fraulein Ulrica, and Hofrath Vogel.

Goethe was in a particularly cheerful mood, and entertained us before dinner with some pleasant Frankfort stories, especially about Rothschild and Bethmann's interference with one another's speculations.

Count Reinhard went to Court, and the others sat down to dinner. The conversation was lively and agreeable. They talked of travelling; of the bathing places; and Madame Schopenhauer interested us in the arrangements going on at her new estate on the Rhine, near the Island Nonnenwerth.

After dinner, Count Reinhard returned, and was much complimented on the quickness of his motions, as he not only had dined at Court, but changed his dress twice, since he left us.

He brought us news, that a pope was chosen, and from the family of the Castiglioni. Goethe detailed to

the company the ceremonies usual when a pope is chosen.

Count Reinhard, who had passed the winter at Paris, gave us a great deal of desirable information about celebrated statesmen, literati, and poets — Chateaubriand, Guizot, Salvandy, Béranger, Merimée, and others.

After dinner, when all except myself had taken leave, Goethe showed me two very interesting papers. They were two letters written in his youth, one in 1770, from Strasburg, to his friend, Dr. Horn, at Frankfort; one in July, the other in December. In both spoke a young man who had a presentiment of the great things which lay before him to do. In the last, traces of "Werther" are visible; the Sesenheim connection had been formed, and the happy youth, dizzy with the sweetest feelings, seemed lavishing away his days, as if in a dream. The hand-writing was calm, clear, and elegant; it had already formed to the character it always afterwards preserved. I could not forbear reading again and again these charming letters, and left Goethe full of emotions of happiness and gratitude.

Sunday, 12th April.

Goethe read me his answer to the King of Bavaria. He had represented himself as if ascending the steps of the Villa, and expressing his feelings to the King, by word of mouth.

"It must be difficult," said I, "to preserve exactly the proper tone and manner in such a connection."

"Not difficult," said Goethe, "to one who has had, during a long life, so much intercourse as I with persons of high rank. Yet perfect nature will not do; we do not meet them man to man, but must keep within the line of a certain conventional propriety."

He spoke of the papers belonging to his "Second Residence at Rome," which he is now looking over.

"From the letters," said he, "which were written at that period, I can easily see what advantages and disadvantages come with every time of life, to balance these of earlier and later periods. In my fortieth year, I was as clear and decided on some subjects as at present, and, in many respects, superior to my present self; yet, now, in my eightieth, I possess advantages which I would not exchange for these."

"While you made that remark," said I, "the metamorphosis of plants came before my eyes, and I can well understand that one would not return from the flower to the green leaf, from the fruit or seed to the flower."

"The simile," he replied, "expresses perfectly my meaning."

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"It is bad, however, that we are so hindered in life by false tendencies, and cannot know them to be false until we are already freed from them."

"How," said I, "shall we know whether a tendency be false or no?"

"Either," he replied, "the false tendency produces nothing, or nothing of worth. It is easy enough to judge about this in others; but to be just upon oneself requires great freedom of spirit. And, even if we

do perceive the truth with regard to ourselves, that is not always enough; we delay, doubt, cannot resolve to part, even as the lover cannot leave the beloved maiden of whose infidelity he had repeated proofs long since. This I say, because I remember how many years I was finding out that my tendency to the plastic arts was a false one, and how many, after I was sure that it was so, to separate myself entirely from it."

"But," said I, "that tendency has been of such advantage to you, that it can hardly be considered false."

"I make myself easy about it," said Goethe, "by recollecting how much it has done for me in the way of insight. That is the good we draw from these errors. He who, with inadequate abilities, devotes himself to music, will never, indeed, become a master, but may learn to know and to value a masterly production. With all my toil, I could not be an artist; but, as I tried every department of art, I learned to take cognizance of each stroke, and to know success from failure. This is no small gain; and false tendencies scarce ever fail to produce the like. Even such misdirected efforts were the Crusades; but, though they could not free the holy sepulchre, they weakened the Turks, and prevented them from gaining ground in Europe."

He spoke to me of a book on Peter the Great, by Segur, which had interested and given him much light.

"The situation of Petersburg," said he, "is quite unpardonable, especially as the ground rises in the neighborhood, and the Emperor could have had a

city quite exempt from all this trouble from overflow of the stream, if he had but gone a little higher up, and had only the haven in this low place. An old shipmaster represented this to him, and prophesied that the people of the city would all be drowned every seventy years. There stood also an old tree, with various marks from times when the waters had risen to a great height. It was all in vain; the Emperor stood to his whim, and had the tree cut down, that it might not bear witness against him.

"You will be surprised at such conduct in so great a man. I explain it to myself thus: — Man cannot cast aside his youthful impressions; even bad things, to which he was accustomed in those early years, remain so dear to him that he cannot see their faults. So would Peter the Great repeat Amsterdam, so dear to his youth, upon the Neva; as the Dutch always try to build new Amsterdams in the distant regions where they sometimes go to live."

Monday, 13th April.

I looked again at some of Claude's landscapes.

"The collection," said Goethe, "bears the title *Liber Veritatis*, and might, with equal propriety, be styled *Liber Naturæ et Artis*, — for here we find Nature and Art in the highest state and fairest agreement."

I asked in what school Claude Lorraine formed himself.

"His nearest master," said Goethe, "was Antonio Tasso, who was, however, a pupil of Paul Brill, whose maxims afforded Claude a foundation, and whose

school came in him to flower; for what appeared too earnest and severe in those masters, is, in Claude Lorraine, unfolded to the serenest sweetness and loveliest freedom. There is no going beyond him.

"It is difficult to say from whom so great a genius, and who lived in so remarkable a time and situation, did learn. He looked about, and appropriated every thing which could afford nourishment to his designs. No doubt he was as much indebted to the Caracci school as to his immediate masters.

"Thus, it is usual to say, Julio Romano was the scholar of Raphael; but we might, with as much propriety, say he was the scholar of his age. Only Guido Reni had a scholar, who received so entirely into himself the spirit, intellect, and art of his master, that he was and did almost exactly the same as he. This is a case by itself, and which will hardly be repeated.

"The Caracci school, on the contrary, was calculated to set free and remove obstacles, so that each talent was developed in its natural direction, and masters proceeded from it, all entirely different one from another. The Caracci seemed born to be teachers of Art; they lived in a time when the best had already been done, and they could show their scholars the finest models in all departments. They were great artists, great teachers; but I could not say that they were truly gifted with the spirit, (*geist-reich.*) It is a somewhat bold saying, but so it seems to me."

After I had looked at a few more landscapes of Claude's, I opened an Artist's Lexicon, to see what is

said of this great master. We found "His chief merit was in his *palette*."

We looked at one another, and laughed.

"There you see," said Goethe, "how much he learns who relies on books, and receives all that he finds written."

Tuesday, 14th April.

I found Meyer with Goethe. He showed us in the Claude Lorraine volume, the engraving of the landscape, for which we lately saw in the newspapers that Peel had given four thousand pounds. He has got a beautiful picture; it is no bad bargain.

On the right side of the picture is a group of people sitting and standing. A shepherd is leaning over a girl, whom he seems to be instructing to play upon the pipe. In the middle is a lake, in the full light of the sun; on the left, cattle grazing in the shade of a grove. The two groups balance one another admirably, and the full light has the magical effect usual with that artist.

Meyer said he knew well the villa which the King of Bavaria has bought, and had often been there.

"The house is of moderate size. The King, no doubt, will adorn it, and make it attractive. In my time, the Duchess Amelia lived there, and Herder in the next house. Afterwards, the Duke of Sussex and Lord Munster lived there. Strangers of high rank preferred it on account of the healthy situation and superb prospect."

I asked Meyer how far it was from this Villa to the Vatican.

"From Trinita di Monte, which is near the Villa, and where the artists live," said Meyer, "it is a good half league. We went over the ground daily, and often more than once a day. Sometimes we crossed the Tiber in a boat, instead of going by the bridge. I remember we were returning one fine moonlight night from the Vatican; Bury, Hirt, and Lips, were with me, and we were engaged in the customary dispute, which is the greater, Raphael or Michael Angelo. When we reached the shore, we were fully engaged in argument; some merry rogue — I think it was Bury — proposed we should remain upon the water till the strife was settled, and the parties agreed. The proposal was acceded to, and the boatman bid to put off again. Now indeed the dispute grew lively, and when we reached the opposite shore, we put back, and so on, hour after hour, which suited nobody better than the boatman, who had a new fee each time. He had with him, as his helper, a boy of twelve years old, who knew not what to make of our conduct.

"'Father,' said he, 'what is the matter with these men, that they will not land, and we must keep going back?'

"'I know not, my son,' replied the boatman; 'but I believe they are mad.'

"Finally, in order not to row to and fro the whole night, we agreed, and landed."

We laughed at this anecdote. Meyer was in the best humor; he continued talking of Rome, and Goethe and I took pleasure in listening to him.

"This dispute about Raphael and Michael Angelo," continued Meyer, "was the order of every day, and

always introduced when there were a sufficient number of artists present to support both sides. It usually began at some inn where they had good wine at a cheap rate; pictures were referred to, and, if the adversary disputed the instances adduced, we would adjourn to the Sistine Chapel. The key was kept by a shoemaker, who would open it at any time, for four *groschen*. After having demonstrated from the pictures, and disputed long enough, we would return to the inn, to be reconciled, and forget all controversy over another bottle of wine. So was it each day; and the shoemaker of the Sistine Chapel got many times the four *groschen*."

Mention was made of another shoemaker, who was in the habit of beating out his leather on an antique marble head.

"It was the portrait of a Roman Emperor," said Meyer. "The antique stood before the shoemaker's door, and we have often seen him engaged in this laudable occupation as we passed by."

Wednesday, 15th April.

We talked of people who, without having any real talent, were excited to productivity, and of those who write upon subjects which they do not understand.

"What misleads young people," said Goethe, "is this: We live in a time when culture is so diffused, that it has become the atmosphere which a young man breathes; poetical and philosophical thoughts, which he has imbibed with the air he breathes, live and move within him; he fancies them his own, and utters them as such. But after he has restored to the time what it

gave him, he remains a poor man. He is like a fountain, which spouts forth a little while the water which is drawn into it, but ceases to give a drop when the loan is exhausted."

Tuesday, 1st September.

I mentioned a person now visiting Weimar, who had heard Hegel's Lectures on the proof of the existence of God. Goethe agreed with me, that the time for such lectures was gone by.

"The period of doubt," said he, "is past; men now doubt as little the existence of God as their own. And the nature of the Divinity, immortality, the existence of our own souls, and their connection with our bodies, are eternal problems, which our philosophers make no progress in solving. A late French philosopher begins confidently thus: —

"'It is acknowledged that man consists of two parts, body and soul; accordingly, we will begin by speaking of the body, and pass on to the soul.'

"Fichte went somewhat farther, and extricated himself more skilfully from the dilemma, when he said —

"'We shall speak of man regarded as a body, and of man regarded as a soul.'

"He felt that a so closely combined whole could not be separated. Kant has given more satisfaction than others, by drawing the limits, beyond which, human intellect has not strength to penetrate, and leaving at rest the insoluble problems. I doubt not of our immortality, for nature cannot dispense with our continued activity. But we are not all, in like manner,

immortal; and he who would manifest himself as a great Entelecheia to future ages, must begin now.

"While the Germans are tormenting themselves with these philosophical problems, the English, with their fine practical understanding, laugh at us, and win the world. Every body knows how they have declaimed against the slave trade; and, while they have made us believe they were incited solely by motives of humanity, we at last discover that they have an object, such as they do nothing without; and this we should have known before. They themselves need the blacks, in their extensive domains on the western coast of Africa, and they do not like the trade which carries them off. They have large colonies of negroes in America, which are very profitable. From these they can supply the demand from North America, and, if slaves are brought from other places, it injures their traffic; so they preach against the inhuman African slave trade. At the Congress of Vienna, the English envoy denouncing it with great zeal, the Portuguese envoy had the good sense quietly to reply, he did not know they came together to sit in judgment on the world, or to decide upon maxims of morality. He well understood the object of England; he also had his, which he knew how to plead for and obtain."

Sunday, 6th December.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the first scene of the second act of "Faust." The effect was great, and gave my soul a high satisfaction. We are once more in Faust's study, where Mephistophiles finds all

just as he had left it. He takes from the hook Faust's old study-gown, and a thousand moths and insects flutter out from it. While these are quieting down again, and Mephistophiles is speaking, the locality is brought very clearly before our eyes. He puts on the gown, while Faust lies behind a curtain, in a state of paralysis, intending to play the Doctor's part once more. He pulls the bell, and such an awful tone reverberates into the cloister, that the doors spring open and the walls tremble. The servant rushes up, and finds Mephistophiles in Faust's seat; he does not recognize, but pays him respect. Being asked, he replies that Wagner is now become a celebrated man, but is always hoping the return of his master; that he is at this moment busy in his laboratory, seeking to produce an Homunculus. The servant retires, and the Bachelor enters; he is the same whom we knew some years ago as a shy young student, when Mephistophiles (in Faust's gown) made such a joke of him. He is now become a man, but still is so in darkness that even Mephistophiles can do nothing with him.

"The conception," said Goethe, "is now so old, for I have had it in my mind for fifty years; the materials have consequently accumulated to such a degree, that separation and choice are by no means easy. The scheme, even of the second part, is as old as I say; but it may be an advantage that I have not written it down till now, that I have so much knowledge of the world. I am like one who began life with a small sum in silver and copper money, which he

has during his course exchanged again and again with such profit that he has it now in pure gold."

I asked whether the Bachelor was not meant to represent a certain class of ideal philosophers.

"No," said Goethe, "I only meant to personify the arrogance which is natural to youth, and of which we had such striking examples after our war for freedom. A man believes, in his youth, that the world properly began with him, and that all exists for his sake.

"In the East, there was a man who, every morning, collected his people about him, and never would go to work till he had commanded the sun to arise. But he was wise enough not to speak his command till the sun of its own accord was ready to appear."

Goethe remained awhile absorbed in silent thought; then he said —

"I cannot but think that the demons, dallying with men, have placed among them single figures, so alluring that every one strives after them, so great that nobody can reach them. Raphael was one — he whose thoughts and acts were equally perfect; some distinguished followers have come near, but none has ever equalled him. Mozart represents the unattainable in music; Shakspeare in poetry. I know what you can say on the other side; but I refer to the natural dowry, the inborn wealth. Even so, none can stand by the side of Napoleon. It was great that the Russians were so moderate as not to go to Constantinople; but we find a similar trait in Napoleon — he too had the moderation not to go to Rome."

I thought to myself that the demons had made

Goethe even so — a form too alluring not to be striven after; too great to be reached.

Wednesday, 16th December.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the second scene of the second act of "Faust," where Mephistophiles visits Wagner, who is hoping to make a human being by chemical means. The work succeeds; the Homunculus appears in the phial, a shining being, and becomes at once active. He repels Wagner's questions upon incomprehensible subjects; reasoning is not his business; he wishes to act, and begins with our hero, Faust, who needs a higher aid to shake off the paralysis. He sees into the soul of Faust, and, by describing the dream he is enjoying, brings a most charming picture before our eyes. Mephistophiles sees nothing in it, and the Homunculus jeers at his northern nature.

"Generally," said Goethe, "you will perceive that Mephistophiles appears to disadvantage beside the Homunculus, who is like him in clearness of intellect, superior to him in his tendency to the beautiful, and to a beneficent activity. For the rest, he styles him cousin; for such intellectual beings as this Homunculus, not yet saddened and limited by the assumption of a human nature, belong to the class of demons, and thus there is a sort of relationship between him and Mephisto."

"Certainly," said I, "Mephistophiles occupies here but a subordinate situation; yet I cannot help thinking that he has been at work, in his secret way, to produce the Homunculus. It would be like what I have seen

of him before. Thus superior in the whole, he can well afford to let himself down a little in particulars."

"Your feeling is correct," said Goethe; "indeed, I have doubted whether it would not be well to put some verses into the mouth of Mephistophiles, to make the reader aware of the truth."

"It would do no harm," said I. "Yet is this intimated by the words with which Mephistophiles closes the scene —

'Am Ende hängen wir doch ab
Von Creaturen die wir machten.'"

"True," said Goethe, "that would be almost enough for the attentive; but I will think about adding some verses."

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I thought again of Faust's dream about Leda.

"How," said I, "the parts of such a work bear upon, perfect, and sustain one another! This dream of Leda is the groundwork of 'Helena.'"

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Goethe was pleased that I remarked this.

"So you will see," said he, "how much there is in these earlier acts to harmonize the classic and romantic; this is the rising ground to the spot where both those forms of poetry are brought out, and in some sort balance one another.

"The French begin to think justly of these forms. Both classic and romantic, say they, are equally good; only let the form be used with judgment, and be the

medium of valuable thoughts. You can be absurd in either, and then it is good for nothing."

Sunday, 20th December.

Dined with Goethe. We spoke of the Chancellor, and I asked whether he did not bring any news of Manzoni, on his return from Italy.

"He wrote to me about him," said Goethe. "The Chancellor paid Manzoni a visit; he lives on his estate near Milan, and is, to my sorrow, always sick."

"'Tis singular," said I, "that we generally find persons of distinguished talents, and especially poets, with very weak constitutions."

"The extraordinary performances of these men," he replied, "show that they are of uncommonly delicate organization, which makes them more susceptible to unusual emotions, and enables them to hear more easily the celestial voices. Such an organization is easily injured or destroyed by conflict with the world and the elements; and he who does not, like Voltaire, combine with great sensibility an equally uncommon tenacity, must lose his health entirely. Schiller was always sick. When I first knew him, I thought he could not live four weeks; but he had something of the tenacity I spoke of; he sustained himself many years, and would have done so longer, if he would have lived in a way more favorable to health."

We spoke of the theatre, and of a certain part.

"I have seen Unzelmann in it," said Goethe; "we always enjoyed seeing him; for he had a perfect freedom of spirit, which he imparted to us. 'Tis

with acting as with all the other arts. What the artist does or has done is sure to excite in us the self-same mood in which he did it. A free mood in the artist makes us free; a restrained one restrains us. We usually find this freedom in the artist who is fully grown up to his work. This is what pleases us in the Flemish school; those artists painted the life around them, of which they were perfect masters. An actor, to have this freedom, must, by study, fancy, and disposition, have become perfect master of his part, must have all bodily requisites at his command, and be upheld by a certain youthful energy. But study is not enough without imagination; imagination is not enough without suitableness of disposition. Women do the most through imagination and temperament; thence came the excellence of Madame Wolff."

We discussed the possibility of acting this sequel to "Faust."

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I spoke of the elephant in the carnival.

"He would not be the first elephant that has appeared on the stage," said Goethe. "In Paris, they have one who plays a whole part. He is on a side in some public dispute, takes the crown from the head of one king, and sets it upon that of another, which, of course, must have a grand effect. When he is called for, at the close of the piece, he comes out alone, makes his reverence, and then returns. So you see that we need not want for elephants at our carnival. But it is on too large a scale, and would

demand such a manager as is not easily to be found."

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"If," said I, "it could be represented as you have designed it, the public would sit astonished, and confess that it wanted power of thought and sense fitly to receive such an empire of apparitions."

"Go," said Goethe, "leave your public, of which I would not willingly hear any thing. The most important is to put it in writing; then let the public receive it as it will, and use it as far as it can."

We spoke of the boy Lenker.

"You have discovered Faust under the mask of Plutus, Mephistophiles under that of Avarice; but who is the boy Lenker?"

I hesitated, and knew not what to say.

"It is Euphorion," said Goethe.

"But how," said I, "can he, who is not born till the third act, appear here at the carnival?"

"Euphorion," he replied, "is not a human, but an allegorical being. In him is Poetry personified, which is bound down to no time, no place, and no person. The same spirit, who is afterwards pleased to appear as Euphorion, is here the boy Lenker, like ghosts which are present every where, and can appear at any hour."

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[Goethe afterwards read other scenes to Eckermann; but, as only an outline of them is given, unaccompanied by any explanatory hints, they are omitted.]

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Sunday, January 3, 1830.

Goethe showed me the "English Keepsake," for 1830, with very fine engravings, and some extremely interesting letters from Lord Byron, which I read after dinner. He was, meanwhile, reading the French translation of his "Faust," by Gérard.

"I have some singular thoughts in my head," said he, "on finding this book translated into a language over which Voltaire had the mastery fifty years since. You cannot understand my thoughts upon this subject, because you can have no idea of the influence which Voltaire and his great contemporaries had over me in my youth, as over the whole civilized world. My biography does not clearly show how powerful was the influence of these men over me in those years; how difficult it was for me to defend myself against them, to maintain my own ground, and true relation to nature."

We talked further about Voltaire, and Goethe recited to me his poem *Les Systèmes*, from which I perceived how he had studied and appropriated such things in early life.

He praised Gérard's translation as very successful, although mostly in prose.

"I cannot read my 'Faust,'" said he, "now, in German, but this French translation gives it back to me in all its original freshness and significance."

"'Faust,'" continued he, "is, indeed, incommensurable; and all attempts to bring it nearer to the understanding are in vain. Also, it should be considered, that the first part is the product of a somewhat obscure era in my mental progress. How-

ever, its very obscurity has a charm for men's minds, exciting them to thought, as all insoluble problems do."

Sunday, 10th January.

This afternoon, Goethe did me the great pleasure of reading those scenes in which Faust visits the Mothers.

The novelty and unexpectedness of this subject, with his manner of reading the scene, struck me so forcibly, that I felt myself translated into the situation of Faust, shuddering at the communication from Mephistophiles.

Although I had heard and felt the whole, yet so much remained an enigma to me, that I felt myself compelled to ask Goethe for some explanation. But he, in his usual manner, wrapped himself up in mystery, looking on me with wide, open eyes, and repeating the words —

"'*Die Mütter! Mütter! 's klingt so wunderlich.*'

"I can betray to you no more, except that I found, in Plutarch, that in ancient Greece the Mothers were spoken of as divinities. This is all for which I am indebted to tradition; the rest is my own invention. Take the manuscript home with you, study it carefully, and see to what conclusion you come."

I was very glad of an opportunity to study these interesting scenes in quiet, and took thereby the following view of the peculiar characters and operations, the abode and outward circumstances, of the Mothers: —

Could we imagine that our earth had an empty space in its centre, permitting one to go hundreds of miles in one direction, without coming in contact with any thing corporeal, this might be the abode of those unknown goddesses to whom Faust descends. They do not live in any place; for nothing stands firm in their neighborhood. Neither can we attach to them the idea of time; for no heavenly body shines upon them, which, by its rising or setting, can mark the alternation of day and night.

Thus, dwelling in eternal obscurity and loneliness, these Mothers are creative beings. They are the creating and sustaining principles from which all phenomena on the surface of the earth proceed. Whatever ceases to breathe, returns in its spiritual nature to them, and they preserve it until a fit occasion rises to imbody it anew. All souls and forms of what has been, or will be, hover like clouds in the vast space of their abode.

So are the Mothers surrounded, and the magician must be able to enter their dominion, if he would obtain power over the forms of beings, and be able to call back former existences to seeming life.

The eternal metamorphoses of earthly being, birth and growth, destruction and new formation, are also the unceasing care of the Mothers; and, as in all which receives new life on earth, female influences are most busy, these creating and sustaining divinities are thought of as female, and may rightly receive the title of Mothers.

Really, this is all only poetic creation; but the limited human mind cannot penetrate far into these

subjects, and is well satisfied to find something on which it may rest. We see on earth apparitions, and feel influences, whose origin and aim are equally unknown to us; this leads the mind to the idea of a spiritual source of divinity, for which we have no adequate thought and no fit expression; which we must draw down to us, and *anthropomorphize*, in order in some measure to imbody and make comprehensible our obscure sentiments.

So have all Mythi arisen, which from century to century have lived with nations, and, in like manner, this new one of Goethe's, which has at least the semblance of a truth of nature, and may indeed bear comparison with the best in its kind.

Sunday, 24th January.

"I have to-day received a letter from our famous director of the mines in Stotternheim," said Goethe, "whose introduction I must communicate to you.

"'I have had an experience,' writes he, 'which will not be lost upon me;' and what do you suppose this is? It involves the loss of at least a thousand dollars. The shaft by which you descend through earth and stone, twelve hundred feet down to the rock salt, he improvidently omitted to prop up sufficiently at the sides. The soft ground has crumbled away, and so filled up the pit, that it will be a very expensive piece of work to clear it out again. He will then, 1200 feet down, put in metal pipes, to secure him for the future against a similar mischance. He should have done it at first; but such people as he have a fearlessness in their undertakings, which those of a different tempera-

ment cannot understand, without whose aid they would never venture on such enterprises. He takes his misfortune very coolly, and simply thinks "I have gained an experience which will not be lost upon me." This is the conduct of such a man as I find true pleasure in; who rises from his fall, and begins to act again immediately. What say you to it? Does it not please you?"

"It reminds me of Sterne's complaint," I replied, "that he had not used his sorrows like a reasonable man."

"It is something similar," said Goethe.

"I am also reminded of Behrisch," continued I. "Accidentally, this very day, I have been reading his chapter on experience.

"'Experience,' says he, 'is only to be gained by doing something which one would not willingly have done.'"

"Yes," said Goethe, smiling, "such is the ancient pastime in which we so shamefully lose our time."

"Behrisch," said I, "seems to have been a man full of sweetness and elegance. How pleasant is the joke in the wine-cellar, when he prevents the young man in such whimsical ways from visiting his mistress!"

"Yes," said Goethe, "that is pretty; 'twould have been a most attractive scene on the stage, as, indeed, Behrisch every way shows a talent for the theatre."

We then talked over all the odd anecdotes told of Behrisch in Goethe's "Life;" his gray clothes, where silk, satin, and wool are shaded one with another, as

if all his care had been to find some new shade of gray; how he wrote his poems imitating the compositor; his favorite pastime of lying at the window to observe the dress of the passers-by, and in his thoughts to alter it in the most ludicrous manner.

"Then his way of amusing himself with the post-boys; is not that droll?"

"I do not remember that," said I; "it is not mentioned in your memoirs."

"Indeed," said Goethe, "then will I tell it you. When we were lying together at the window, and he saw the letter-carrier coming up the street, and going from one house to another, he would take out a penny, and lay it on the window-sill.

"'Seest thou the letter-carrier?' says he, turning to me. 'He is coming here immediately: he has a letter to thee; and what a letter! no every-day affair; but a letter with a check on the bank; with a check for, I dare not say how much; see, he is coming in. No! but he will come immediately. There he is again now; here! here! my friend, this is the place. He goes by — how stupid! O, how stupid! how can one be so stupid, and act so shamefully in two ways! — towards thee, to whom he does not give the check which he had in his hand all ready for thee, and towards himself, to lose this penny, which I had taken out for him, and must now put up again.' Then he would put, with the most ludicrous air of dignity, the penny again in his pocket."

I was amused with this anecdote, so like the rest. I asked Goethe whether he did not see Behrisch in later days.

"Yes," said he, "in 1776, when I went with the Duke to Dessau, where he lived as governor of the hereditary prince. I found him, as formerly, the graceful courtier, and of the pleasantest humor."

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"I saw him last in 1801. He was an old man then, and still in the best humor. He had very handsome chambers in the castle, and had filled one of them with geraniums, of which he was then very fond.

"At that time, the botanists had made a new classification among the geraniums, and given a certain sort the name of Pelargoniums. This made Behrisch very angry. He was always scolding at the botanists. 'Blockheads!' said he; 'I think I have a whole room full of geraniums, and they come and tell me they are Pelargoniums. What shall I do with them if they are not geraniums? What do I care for their Pelargoniums?' And so he talked by the half hour together."

We talked then of the classic "Carnival," the beginning of which Goethe had read me some days since.

"Mythological figures," said he, "press upon me in crowds; but I take care to use only such as will produce a picturesque effect. Faust is now with Chiron, and I hope to satisfy myself with the scene. If I am diligent, I shall finish my 'Carnival' in a few months. Nothing shall again distract me from 'Faust.' It will be strange if I live to complete it; yet it is possible. The fifth act is as good as done, and the fourth will all but write itself."

He then spoke of his health, and said how happy he was to find himself so perfectly well.

"For this," said he, "I may thank Vogel; but for him I should have said farewell to earth long since. He is a born physician, besides being one of the most genial men that I have ever known; but we will not say how good he is, lest he be taken from us."

Sunday, 31st January.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of Milton.

"I have lately," said Goethe, "been reading his 'Samson,' which has more of the spirit of ancient times, than any production of any other modern poet. He is great, indeed, and his own blindness enabled him adequately to describe the situation of Samson. Milton was truly a poet; one to whom we owe all possible respect."

The newspapers were brought in, and we saw in the "Berlin Gazette," that whales and sea-monsters had been introduced on the stage there.

Goethe read in the French periodical, the "Times," an article on the enormous salaries of the English clergy, who receive more than all other ecclesiastics in Christendom put together.

"It has been maintained, said Goethe, "that the world is governed by pay; this I know, by examining the distribution of pay, we can find out whether it is well or ill governed."

Wednesday, 3d February.

We talked of Mozart.

"I saw him," said Goethe, "at seven years old,

when he gave us a concert while travelling on that route. I myself was about fourteen years old, and remember perfectly the little man, with his frisure and sword."

I stared, hardly able to realize that Goethe was old enough to have known Mozart when a child.

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Wednesday, 10th February.

Dined with Goethe. He spoke with real gratification of the poem written by Riemer, for the festival of the 2d February.

"All," said Goethe, "which Riemer writes, is fit to be seen both by master and journeymen."

We talked also of the classic Walpurgis night. He said I should see no more of it till it be finished, and then I might have it, and examine it in quiet. He sent his servant to inquire after the Grand Duchess Mother, who is very ill, and seems in a dangerous situation.

"She should not have seen the masquerade," said he; "but princes are accustomed to take their own way, and the protests of her physician and attendants were in vain. With the same strong will with which she once confronted Napoleon, she now resists sickness; and I see what this leads to: she will pass away, like the Grand Duke, in the full force and health of a mind which the body will no longer obey."

He was visibly saddened, and kept silence for a while; but soon we spoke again on pleasanter themes,

and he gave me an account of a book written in justification of Sir Hudson Lowe's conduct.

"It contains fine anecdotes," said he, "such as are to be had only from eye-witnesses. You know Napoleon was in the habit of wearing a dark green uniform. This was, after a while, so tarnished and faded by sunlight and constant wear, that he needed another. He wished another of the same color; but nothing of the kind was to be found on the island. There was, indeed, a piece of green cloth; but the color was imperfect, and inclined to the yellowish. The lord of the world found it impossible to put on such a color as that; and he was obliged to have his old uniform turned, and wear it so.

"Is not that tragic? Is it not pathetic, that the ruler of the world should be so reduced, that he must wear a turned uniform? Yet, when you remember how this man trampled upon the lives and happiness of millions to accomplish his objects, the retribution of destiny seems a very mild one. Nemesis could not help showing a little complaisance to so great a hero. Napoleon gives us a warning how dangerous it is to rise into the region of the absolute, and sacrifice all to the carrying out of an idea."

I went to see the "Star of Seville," at the theatre.

Sunday, 14th February.

To-day, on my way to Goethe, I heard the news of the Grand Duchess Mother's death. I entered the house full of apprehensions for the effect which this news might have on Goethe at his advanced age.

The servants said his daughter-in-law was gone to tell him the sad news.

"He has been, for fifty years," thought I, "attached to this princess, and blessed with her especial favor and friendship; her death must deeply move him."

When I entered his room, I was surprised to find him in his usual cheerfulness and vigor, taking his soup with his daughter-in-law and grandchildren, as if nothing had happened.

We talked of indifferent things. Presently, all the bells began to toll; Frau von Goethe looked at me, and we talked louder, that the tone of the death-bells might not come so near him. We thought he felt like us; but he did not feel like us. His mind was in a wholly different position. He sat before us, like a being of a higher nature, inaccessible to earthly woes.

Vogel was announced. He sat down, and told us all the circumstances of the last hours of the noble departed; to which Goethe listened with the same calmness and composure. He went away, and we talked awhile on other subjects.

Goethe praised the "Reflections upon Play," in the last number of "Chaos."

Frau von Goethe took the children away, and left me alone with Goethe.

He then talked to me of his classic Walpurgis night, saying he was getting forward in it every day, and effecting wonderful things, quite beyond his expectation.

He then showed me a letter which he had to-day received from the King of Bavaria, and which I read

with great interest. The King's true and noble way of thinking was manifest in every line; and Goethe seemed much pleased by his constant interest in himself.

Hofrath Soret now entered, with a message of friendly condolence from His Imperial Highness to Goethe, which contributed to maintain his serenity. He spoke of the celebrated Ninon de L'Enclos. In her sixteenth year, this transcendent beauty lay, apparently, on her death-bed, and, with the most perfect composure, comforted those who stood around it, saying, "Do I leave mere mortals behind me?" However, she lived to the age of ninety; and from that time to her eightieth year made happy or desperate hundreds of lovers.

He then talked of Gozzi, and his theatre at Venice, where the actors had merely subjects given them, and filled up the details impromptu. Gozzi said there were only six-and-thirty tragic situations. Schiller thought there were more, but could never succeed in finding so many.

Then were said many interesting things about Grimm; about his life, his character, and his distrust of paper money.

Wednesday, 17th February.

We talked of the theatre, — of the colors of decorations and dresses. The result was as follows: —

Generally speaking, decorations should have a tone suitable to bring out the colors of dresses, like Beuther's, which fall more or less into the brownish. But, if the scene-painter cannot use one of these

undecided colors, — if, for instance, he must introduce a red or a yellow room, a white tent, or a green garden, — the actor should have the judgment to avoid similar colors in his dress. If he comes into a red room, dressed in a red uniform and green pantaloons, his body vanishes, and you see only his legs; if he goes into a green garden, in the same dress, an opposite result takes place. I have seen this happen where an actor in a white uniform and dark pantaloons appeared in a white tent. And if the scene-painter must use a green, or red, or yellow back-ground, he should make it as soft and aerial as possible, that the contrast with the dresses in the fore-ground may not be violent.

We talked of the *Iliad*, and Goethe called my attention to the judgment shown in leaving Achilles inactive for a time, that the other heroes may have an opportunity to come forward and unfold their characters.

Of the "Elective Affinities," he said that it contained no stroke which was not taken from his own experience, though nothing was told just as it had happened; the same of the Sesenheim history.

After dinner, we looked through a portfolio of designs from the Flemish school. One painting of a harbor, where men on one side are drawing fresh water, and on the other are playing dice on a barrel, gave occasion to interesting remarks, as to how far the Real must be avoided if we would not mar the effect of a work of Art. The cover of the barrel takes the principal light; you see, by the men's gestures, that they are throwing the dice, which,

however, are not painted upon the cover, because they would break the light, and have a bad effect.

Ruysdael's studies plainly showed what toil is needful to form such an artist.

Sunday, 21st February.

Dined with Goethe. He showed me the air-plant, (*Luft-planze,*) which I looked at with great interest. I remarked therein an effort to continue its existence as long as possible, before permitting its successor to manifest itself.

"I have determined," said Goethe, "to read neither the 'Times,' nor the 'Globe,' for a month to come. Things are in such a position, that some event of importance must happen within that time; I will wait till the news comes to me. My Walpurgis night will gain from this abstinence; and, besides, one gets nothing from such interests — a consideration oftentimes left too much out of mind."

He showed me a letter, written by Boisserée, from Munich, which had given him great pleasure. Boisserée spoke especially of the "Second Residence in Rome," and on some points in the last sheets of "Art and Antiquity." His observations showed equal good will and judgment; and we found cause highly to praise the activity and knowledge of this valuable man.

Goethe then spoke of a new picture, by Cornelius, as being equally fine in conception and execution; and the remark was made that opportunity for coloring a picture well must be found in the composition.

Later, while walking, the air-plant came again into

my mind, and I thought how necessary it becomes to every being, after a while, to reproduce itself. This law of nature reminded me of the history of God living alone for a while, and then creating the Son, who is like him. So, too, good masters find nothing more appropriate to do than to form good scholars, by whom their efforts and opinions may be carried down into the next generation. Even so does the poet or artist reproduce himself in his work; if that is excellent, he also must have been excellent. Thus no good work of another shall excite envy in me, while from its existence I must infer that of a man worthy to be its author.

Wednesday, 24th February.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of Homer. I remarked how real and direct the interposition of the gods seems.

"That is infinitely delicate and human," said Goethe, "and I thank Heaven the times are gone by when the French were permitted to call this interposition of the gods *machinery*. But, really, to learn to appreciate merits so vast required some time, for it demanded a complete regeneration of their modes of culture."

He said he had given a new touch to enhance the beauty of the apparition of Helena, which was suggested by a remark of mine, and did honor to my perceptions.

After dinner, he showed me a sketch from a picture by Cornelius — Orpheus, before the throne of Pluto, supplicating for the release of Eurydice. The picture

seemed to us well conceived, and the details excellent; yet it did not satisfy or yield a genuine pleasure to the mind. Perhaps, we thought, the coloring may give it the effect of greater harmony, or perhaps the following moment, when Orpheus has conquered the heart of Pluto, and Eurydice is about to be restored, would have been more propitious. The situation, in that case, not being so fraught with excitement and expectation, the effect would have been more satisfactory to the beholder.

Monday, 1st March.

Dined at Goethe's, with Hofrath Voigt, of Jena. The conversation turned entirely on subjects of natural history, in which Hofrath Voigt displayed the most various and comprehensive knowledge.

Goethe mentioned that he had received a letter, containing this objection to his system, — that the cotyledons are not leaves, because they had no eyes behind them. But we satisfied ourselves, by examining various plants, that the cotyledons *have* eyes, as well as all the following leaves.

Voigt says that the *aperçu* of the "Metamorphosis of Plants" is one of the most fruitful discoveries which researches into natural history have given to modern times.

We spoke of collections of stuffed birds; and Goethe told us how an Englishman kept, in great cages, hundreds of living birds, which he fed daily. Some of these died, and he had them stuffed. These stuffed birds pleased him so well, that he thought

perhaps it might be better to kill them all, and have them stuffed; and this whim he actually carried into effect.

Voigt mentioned that he had thoughts of translating Cuvier's "Natural History," and publishing it, with some additions of his own.

After dinner, when Voigt had gone, Goethe showed me the manuscript of his *Walpurgis Nacht*, and I was astonished to see to what bulk it had grown.

Wednesday, 3d March.

Went to walk with Goethe before dinner. He spoke favorably of my poem on the King of Bavaria, observing that Lord Byron had had a favorable influence upon me, but that I still wanted that tact and propriety of which Voltaire was such a master; and he recommended me to take Voltaire as my model in this respect.

At table, we talked of Wieland, more particularly of his "Oberon;" and Goethe was of opinion that the foundation of this poem was weak, and that the plan had not been sufficiently thought over before the author began to work upon it. It was not well judged to let the Fairy King procure the hairs and teeth, because the hero is left inactive all that time. But the pregnant, graceful, picturesque treatment of the subject makes the book so attractive to the reader that he never thinks of these faults.

We continued talking on various subjects, till at last we came upon Entelecheia.

"The obstinacy of the individual, and the power possessed by man of shaking off what does not suit

him," said Goethe, "is to me a proof that some such thing exists."

I was just thinking the same thing, and was the better pleased when Goethe spoke it out.

"Leibnitz," continued he, "had similar thoughts about such independent existences; and, indeed, what we style Entelecheia is the same with his Monads."

I resolved to read Leibnitz on this subject.

Sunday, 7th March.

Went to Goethe about twelve, and found him in fine health and spirits. He said he must lay aside the Walpurgis night for a while, to attend to the new edition of his works.

"I have been wise enough," said he, "to stop short in mid career while I had yet many things in my mind to say. Thus it will be much easier to me to join on again, than if I had continued to write till I came to a stand." I marked this in my mind as a valuable precept.

We were to have taken a drive before dinner, but found it so pleasant within doors, that Goethe had the horses taken out.

Meanwhile, the servant, Frederic, had been unpacking a great chest, just come from Paris. It was a present from David, the sculptor — bass-relief portraits, in plaster, of fifty-seven celebrated persons. We had great pleasure in examining them, and observing characteristic traits.

I was particularly interested by Merimée; the head was powerful and bold as his genius, and, as Goethe remarked, had somewhat of the humorist. Victor

Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Emile Deschamps, showed themselves as free, tranquil, and of decided character. We were rejoiced to see Mademoiselle Gay, Madame Tastü, and other young female writers. The powerful head of Fabvier reminded us of the men of earlier ages; we looked at it again and again.

Goethe said repeatedly that he could not adequately show his gratitude to David for sending him such a treasure. He would show this collection to strangers, and, in that way, get light on some of these personages, who were not well known to him.

Some books also were in the chest, which he had taken into another room. Before looking at them, we were to dine. We had a very pleasant talk on plans and modes of working.

"It is not good for man to be alone," said Goethe. "He needs sympathy and suggestion to do any thing well. I owe to Schiller 'Achilleis,' and many of my ballads, to which he urged me; and shall be in like manner indebted to you, if I should complete the second part of 'Faust.' I have often said so before, but I repeat it, to make sure that you are aware of it."

These words rejoiced me, for I felt that there was much truth in what he said. After dinner, Goethe opened one of the packets. This contained the poems of Emile Deschamps, accompanied by a letter, which Goethe showed me. I saw with delight what influence was attributed to Goethe over the new life of French literature, and how the young poets loved and revered him as their intellectual head. So had Shakspeare worked upon the youth of Goethe. It could not be

said of Voltaire, that he had any such influence on the young poets of other countries; so that they combined to work according to his ideas, esteeming him as their teacher and master. The letter of Deschamps was written with a charming cordiality and freedom.

"You see there the spring time of a beautiful mind," said Goethe.

We found also a leaf, which David had sent with various drawings of the *hats* of Napoleon.

"That is something for my son," said Goethe, and sent him the leaf immediately.

The young Goethe came down, full of glee, declaring that these hats were the *non plus ultra* for his collection. Five minutes had not passed before the leaf, under glass and in a frame, was in its place among other mementoes of the hero.

Next day, Herr von Goethe came to see me, and informed me that he was now to set forth on his long-expected journey to Italy; that his father had given him the necessary sum, and that he wished I should be his companion. We rejoiced together, and talked over our preparations.

At noon I went to Goethe's house. As soon as I came in, he beckoned me to the window. He expressed his satisfaction at his son's project, and spoke with pleasure of the advantages I should derive from it as to my general culture.

He showed me then a Christ with twelve apostles, and we spoke of the imperfections of such figures as subjects for the sculptor.

"One apostle," said Goethe, "generally looks just

as the other; for very few have lives and deeds which would give them distinct character and meaning. I have lately amused myself with inventing a cycle of twelve biblical figures, where each one has meaning, each a distinct character, and therefore each one is a suitable object for the artist.

"First, Adam, the handsomest of men, as perfect in his form as can be imagined. He may lean one hand upon a spade, as a symbol that it is the vocation of man to till the earth.

"Next, Noah, with whom a new creation begins. He cultivates the vine; and this figure may have something of the expression of the Indian Bacchus.

"Next, Moses, as the first lawgiver.

"Then, David, warrior and king.

"Next, Isaiah, prince and prophet.

"Daniel, as bearing a reference to the future Messiah.

"Christ.

"Next to him, John, who loves the present Messiah.

"In this way, Christ would be placed between two youthful figures; of which, the one, Daniel, should be painted as of a gentle countenance, with long hair; but John with more impassioned looks, and short, clustering locks.

"The Captain of Capernaum, as a representative of the believing souls, who were expecting immediate assistance.

"Next, Mary Magdalene, as representative of the penitent — of those who need forgiveness and reformation.

"The idea of Christianity is contained in these two figures.

"Then Paul might come, who most contributed to spread abroad the new law.

"Then James, who went to the farthest nations, and represents missionaries.

"You might close with Peter. The artist should place him near the door, and give him an expression, as if he were carefully examining those who wish to enter, to see whether they are worthy the sanctuary.

"What say you to this cycle? Would it not be richer than that of the twelve apostles, where each looks just like the others? I would paint the Moses and the Magdalen sitting."

I begged Goethe to put this on paper, and he promised to do so, and give it me for the thirty-ninth volume.

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Sunday, 21st March.

Dined with Goethe. He spoke upon the journey of his son, and that we ought not to delude ourselves with over-great expectations.

"Men usually come back much as they went away," said he; "indeed, we must beware lest we return with thoughts which unfit us for the life we must afterwards leave. I brought from Italy the idea of their fine staircases, and have consequently spoiled my house since, by introducing such a one there; the rooms are all smaller than they should have been. The most important thing is to learn to rule oneself.

If I gave way to my impulses, I have such as might ruin me and all about me."

We talked then about ill health, and about the reciprocal influences of body and mind.

"The mind," said Goethe, "is capable of incredible efforts to sustain the body. I suffer much from pain and oppression, but a strong will keeps me up. The mind need only refuse to indulge the body. Thus I cannot work as well when the barometer stands low, as when it is high: since I have observed this, I have exerted myself the more when it is low, and not without success.

"But there are things in the way of poetry which suffer no constraint; and we must wait the favorable hour for what we cannot obtain by mental determination. So I have left myself time for my classical Carnival, that I may work upon it in the fulness of strength and serenity.

"I have endeavored to make distinct sketches of every part, in the true antique style, so that there may be nothing vague or undecided, which might suit the romantic style well enough.

"The idea of the distinction between classical and romantic poetry, which is spread over the civilized world, and occasioned so many quarrels and divisions, came originally from Schiller and myself. I preferred an objective treatment in poetry, and drew thence my rules of criticism; but Schiller, who worked in the subjective way, defended his own fashion, and wrote, with that design, the treatise upon 'Naïve and Sentimental Poetry.' He proved to me that I myself,

though against my will, was a romantic poet, and my 'Iphigenia' too much animated by sentiment to be as classical as some people supposed.

"The Schlegels took up this idea, and carried it further, so that it has since been diffused over the whole world; and now every one talks about classical and romantic — a distinction of which nobody dreamed fifty years ago."

I turned the conversation again upon the cycle of twelve figures, and Goethe further explained it to me thus —

"It would be best to take Adam after the fall: therefore he should be clothed with a thin deer-skin; and, at the same time, in order to express that he is the father of the human race, it would be well to place by him his eldest son, a fearless boy, looking boldly about him — a little Hercules stifling a snake in his hand.

"And I have had another thought about Noah, which pleases me better. I would not have him like an Indian Bacchus; but I will have him as a vintager, which would give the idea of a benefactor, who, as fosterer of the vine, made men free from the sorrows of care and poverty."

He showed me the engraving of Neureuther, for his legend of the horse-shoe.

"The artist," said I, "has given the Savior only eight disciples."

"Eight are too many," replied Goethe; "and he did wisely to divide them into two groups, and thus avoid the monotony of an unmeaning procession."

Wednesday, 24th March.

The pleasantest conversation at table to-day with Goethe. He told me about a French poem which he had found, in manuscript, in the collection of David, under the title "The Laugh of Mirabeau."

"This poem is full of spirit and boldness," said Goethe. "You must see it. It seems as if Mephistophiles had prepared the ink for the poet. It is great if he wrote it without having read 'Faust,' and no less great if he had read it."

Wednesday, 21st April.

I took my leave to-day of Goethe, as we were to set out next morning early for Italy. He charged me to observe very carefully, and write to him now and then. I felt some pain at bidding him farewell; but the sight of his firm health, and my trust that we should meet again in happiness, were my comfort.

He gave me an album, in which he had written these words —

"TO THE TRAVELLER.

"'*Es geht vorüber eh' ich's gewahr werde,*
Und verwandelt sich eh' ich's merke.'[1]

"Weimar, 21st April, 1830."

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[Here follows a short sketch of Eckermann's visit to Italy. A few letters, are inserted from Goethe,

[1] ["Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not." *Job.* — TRANSL.]

of little interest, chiefly valuable as showing the confidence and affection which he felt towards the absent friend. In November, Eckermann set out on his return to Weimar, leaving young Goethe behind him in Italy. On his journey, Eckermann heard, at an inn on the road to Göttingen, of that blow, — the last and heaviest of Goethe's life, — the death of his only son. He says —]

I took a light, and went to my chamber, that I might not exhibit my agitation before strangers. I passed a sleepless night. I could not, for a moment, forget the misfortune which touched me so nearly. On the journey, I fared no better. Vainly did I seek, in the desolate country, beneath a gloomy November sky, for some object that might distract my attention; whenever I stopped at an inn, I heard the subject of my grief mentioned as the latest topic of the day. I was most of all distressed by the fear that Goethe, at so advanced an age, could not outlive the tempest of paternal grief.

"And what an impression," said I to myself, "must my return produce! I, who went out with his son, and now come back alone! He will feel, when he sees me, as if he had never before realized his loss!"

Amid such thoughts and feelings, I reached Weimar, at six o'clock, the evening of the 23d November. I felt once again what cruel moments human beings must go through. In thought, I conversed with higher beings; and when the moon, which had been veiled in thick clouds, emerged for a few moments,

I received it, whether accident or no, as a token of favor from above, and was thus unexpectedly strengthened and reassured.

I went almost immediately to Goethe's house. I saw first Frau von Goethe. I found her already clad in deep mourning, but collected and tranquil; and we had much to say to one another.

I then went to Goethe. He stood upright and firm, and clasped me in his arms. I found him perfectly serene and tranquil. We sat down, and began to talk immediately. I was extremely happy in being with him once more. He showed me two letters which he had begun while I was at Nordheim, but did not send. We talked of the Grand Duchess, the Prince, and many others; but no word was said of his son.

Thursday, 25th November.

Goethe sent me some books, which had arrived as presents for me from English and German authors.

At noon, I went to him. I found him looking at a portfolio of engravings and drawings, which had been offered him for sale. He told me he had had the pleasure, that morning, of a visit from the Grand Duchess, to whom he had mentioned my return.

Frau von Goethe joined us, and we sat down to dinner. Goethe asked an account of my travels. I spoke of Milan, Venice, Genoa; and he seemed particularly interested about the family of the English consul there. I then spoke of Geneva; and he asked with sympathy after the Soret family, and Herr von Bonstetten. He wished a particular account of this last, and I satisfied him as well as I could.

After dinner, I was pleased that he spoke of my "Conversations."

"It must be your first work," said he; "and we will not let it go till the whole be distinct and complete."

But Goethe to-day appeared to me unusually silent, and oftentimes lost in thought, which I feared was no good sign.

Tuesday, 30th November.

Last Friday, we were thrown into a state of great anxiety. Goethe was seized with a hemorrhage in the night, and was near death all the day. He lost, counting the vein they opened, six pounds of blood — a great quantity, at his age. However, the great skill of his physician, Hofrath Vogel, and his incomparable constitution, have saved him this time. He recovers rapidly, has already an excellent appetite, and sleeps again all night. Nobody is admitted, as he is forbidden to speak; but his always active mind cannot rest. He is already thinking of his work. This morning, I received from him the following note, written in bed, with a lead pencil: —

"Have the goodness, my best Doctor, to look yet once again at the accompanying poems, and to rearrange the others, so as to adapt these to their place in the whole. 'Faust' shall presently follow.

"In hope of a happy meeting,

"GOETHE.

"Weimar, 30th November, 1830."

As soon as Goethe had recovered, he busied himself with finishing "Faust," and with the fourth volume of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

He wished me to examine his heretofore unpublished writings, his journals and letters, that we might know exactly what we had best do about the new edition.

Examining my "Conversations" with him was at present out of the question. I thought it wiser, instead of arranging what I had already, to add to my stock while opportunity was still vouchsafed me by a kindly fate.

1831.

[Some pages are here occupied by an account of the method which Eckermann proposed to adopt in publishing Goethe's letters. He detailed it to Goethe, who replied —]

"I will appoint you, in my will, editor of these letters, and mention that we agreed entirely as to the method best to adopt in their arrangement."

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Apropos to some remarks upon Voss's "Luise," Goethe said —

"The critics, now-a-days, trouble themselves greatly if in rhyme an *s* instead of a *ss* alternates with an *s*; such is the devotion to the technics of poetry. Were I young and daring enough, I would, intentionally, sin against their technical fastidiousness. I would use alliterations, assonances, and false rhymes, whenever they came in my way, and suited my convenience. I would fix my attention on what is important, and say

such good things, that every one would be anxious to read and learn them by heart."

Friday, 11th February, 1831.

Goethe spoke with high praise of Carl Schöne, a young philologist of Leipsic, who has written a work upon the costume proper for the plays of Euripides; and, though possessed of extensive learning, has made use of it only so far as was necessary to his aim.

"I am delighted," said Goethe, "to see the productive intelligence with which he seizes upon his subject; for other philologists have of late wasted much time upon technics, and long and short syllables.

"Too great attention to technical minutiæ is a sign of an unproductive time and an unproductive individual.

"Some have other hinderances. Count Platen, for instance, has almost all the essentials for a good poet — imagination, invention, soul to feel, fertility to reproduce; he is complete in the technical part, and has a studiousness and an earnestness which few could rival; but he is hindered by his unfortunate polemical tendency. That he cannot, amid the magnificence of Rome and Naples, forget the paltry concerns of German literature, is unpardonable in a man of such abilities.

"The 'Romantic Œdipus' gives tokens that, especially as to technics, Platen was just the man to write a first-rate German tragedy; but how will he do it after he has used the springs of tragedy to set his parody in motion?

"And then (what is not duly kept in mind) these quarrels occupy the thoughts; the images of our foes are like ghosts gliding between us and all free creation, and disturbing the otherwise sufficiently fragile harmony of nature.

"Lord Byron was ruined by his love for polemics; and Platen should, for the honor of German literature, quit forever a path which can lead to no good."

Saturday, 12th February.

I have been reading in the New Testament, and thinking of a picture Goethe showed me of Christ walking on the water, and Peter coming towards him, at the moment when the apostle begins to sink, in consequence of losing his faith for a moment.

"This," said Goethe, "is a most beautiful history, and one which I love better than any. It expresses the noble doctrine, that man, through faith and animated courage, may come off victor in the most dangerous enterprises, while he may be ruined by a momentary paroxysm of doubt."

Sunday, 13th February.

Goethe told me that he was engaged with the fourth act of "Faust," and had succeeded to his wish in the beginning.

"I had," said he, "long since the *what*, as you know, but was not easy about the *how;* it is the more pleasant that good thoughts come to me.

"I will now invent throughout, from 'Helena' to the fifth act, which is finished, and make out a detailed

plan, that I may work with pleasure and security on parts, as they attract me.

"This act is to bear a quite peculiar character, so that it, like a by-itself-existing little world, need never touch the others, and is only connected with the whole by a slight reference to what precedes and follows it."

"It will also," said I, "be perfectly in character with the rest; for, in fact, are not Auerbach's cellar, the witches' kitchen, the Blocksberg, the imperial diet, the masquerade, the paper money, the laboratory, the classic Walpurgis night, Helena, also by themselves, existing little worlds, which, each shut up within itself, do indeed work upon, yet do not depend upon, one another? The poet, wishing to speak out a manifold world, uses the story of a famous personage as a thread on which he may string what he pleases. Even so are 'Gil Blas' and the 'Odyssey' constructed."

"True," said Goethe; "and what is important in such compositions is, that the parts should be clear and significant, while the whole is incommensurable, and even on that account, like an unsolved problem, lures men to busy themselves with it again and again."

I spoke of a letter from a young soldier, whom I and other friends had advised to go into foreign service. Now, not being pleased with his situation, he blames his advisers.

"When one," said Goethe, "has looked about him in the world long enough, to see how the most

judicious enterprises frequently fail, and the most absurd have the good fortune to succeed, he becomes disinclined to give any one advice. At bottom, he who asks advice shows himself limited; he who gives it gives also proof that he is presumptuous. If any one asks me for good advice, I say I will give it, but only on condition that you will promise not to take it."

The conversation turning on the New Testament, I mentioned that I had been reading again the account of Christ walking on the sea, &c.

"When one has not, for some time, read the Evangelists," said I, "he is astonished at the moral grandeur of the figures. We find in the lofty demands made upon our moral power of will a sort of categorical imperative."

"Especially," said Goethe, "do we find the categorical imperative of faith, which, indeed, Mahomet carried still farther."

"For the rest," said I, "the Evangelists are, if you look closely into them, full of differences and contradictions; and the books must have gone through strange revolutions of destiny, before they were brought together in their present arrangement."

"'Tis like trying to drink out a sea," said Goethe, "to enter into an historical and critical examination of them. It is the best way to appropriate from what is really there such portions as we can use, to strengthen our characters and advance our moral culture. But, as it is pleasant to get a clear notion of the localities, I recommend to you Röhr's admirable book on Palestine. The late Grand Duke was so pleased with this book, that he bought it twice, giving the

first copy to the library, after he had read it, and keeping the other always by him."

I wondered that the Grand Duke should take an interest in this subject.

"Therein," said Goethe, "was he great. He was interested in every thing significant, in whatsoever department it lay. He was always progressive, and sought to domesticate all the good inventions and institutions of his time. If any failed, he spoke of it no more. I often thought how I should excuse to him this or that failure; but he always ignored it in the cheerfulest way, and was immediately engaged with some new plan. This greatness was a part of his being — not acquired, but inborn."

We looked, after dinner, at some engravings, from pictures by the most modern artists.

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"You see," said Goethe, "that none of these are manly. Good natural talents are here, that have attained a high degree of taste and skill. But manliness, (mark and underscore the word,) a certain determined energy which was always to be found in the earlier ages, is wanting to the present, not only in painting, but in all the other arts. The present is a weaker race, whether by birth, or from some fault in their education and nourishment."

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"Certainly, in art and poetry, the personality of the artist is all in all, though certain weak critics and connoisseurs of our day will not acknowledge this, and treat a grand personality as an accessory of little importance to a work.

"But, really, in order to feel and admire a grand personality, a man must himself be somewhat. All who have denied Euripides the praise of sublimity, were either poor herrings, incapable of such exaltation, or shameless charlatans, who, by dint of presumption, seemed to the world more than they really were."

Monday, 14th February.

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Dined with Goethe.

"It is remarkable," said I, "that, of all talents, the musical shows itself earliest; so that Mozart in his fifth, Beethoven in his eighth, and Hummel in his ninth year, astonished all near them by their performance and compositions."

"The musical talent," said Goethe, "may well show itself earliest of any; for it is innate; its life is within; it needs little nourishment from without, and little experience drawn from life. Really, an apparition like that of Mozart remains always an inexplicable prodigy. But how would the Divinity find every where opportunity to do wonders, if it did not sometimes try its powers on extraordinary individuals, at whom we stand astonished, unable to understand whence they come?"

Tuesday, 15th February.

Dined with Goethe. I told him about the theatre; he praised the piece given yesterday — "Henry III.," by Dumas — as of great excellence, but found it very natural that such a dish should not suit the public.

"I should not," said he, "have ventured to give it,

when I was director; for I remember well what trouble we had to smuggle upon the public the 'Constant Prince,' which has far more general human interest, is more poetic, and lies nearer us, than 'Henry III.'"

I spoke of the "Grand Cophta," which I had been re-perusing. I expressed a wish to see it on the stage.

"I am pleased," said Goethe, "that you like that piece, and find there what I have labored to put in. It was indeed no little labor to make an entirely real fact first poetical, and then theatrical. And yet you will grant that it is, throughout, suited to the stage. Schiller was, also, very partial to it; and we gave it once, with brilliant effect, for the higher order of men. But it is not for the public in general; the criminal transactions preserve an apprehensive character, which prevents their coming home to the people. Its bold character places it, indeed, in the sphere of 'Clara Gazul;' and the French poet might envy me for taking from him so good a subject;—so good a subject, because not merely of moral, but also of great historical significance; for this fact immediately preceded the French Revolution, and was, in some sort, its foundation. That fatal story of the necklace destroyed the dignity of the Queen, and deprived her of esteem; thus she lost, in the eyes of the people, that stand-point where she was unassailable. Hate injures no one; it is contempt that casts men headlong. Kotzebue had been hated long; but not till certain journals had made him contemptible, did the student dare to use his dagger upon him!"

Thursday, 17th February.

Dined with Goethe. I brought him his "Residence at Carlsbad," from the year 1807, which I had finished examining that morning. We spoke of wise passages inserted there as hasty remarks of the day.

"People always fancy," said Goethe, laughing, "that we cannot become wise, without becoming old also; but, in truth, as years accumulate, it is hard to keep ourselves as wise as we were. Man becomes, in the different stages of his life, indeed, a different being; but he cannot say that he will surely be a better as he goes onward, and, in certain matters, he is as likely to be right in his twentieth, as in his sixtieth year.

"We see the world one way from a plain, another way from the promontory, another from the glacier fields of the Alps. We see, from one of these points, a larger piece of world than from the other; but who can say that we see most truly from any one of them? When a writer leaves monuments on the different steps of his life, it is chiefly important that he should have from nature a foundation, and good-will; that he should, at each step, see and feel clearly, and say distinctly and truly, what has passed in his mind. Then will his writings, if they were true to the season in which they originated, remain always true and right, however the writer may unfold or alter.

"Lately, I found, on a piece of waste paper, something that pleased me. I said to myself, 'Thou wouldst have said much the same.' But, as I looked more closely at the leaf, it was from one of my own

works. For, as I am always striving onwards, I forget what I have written, and soon regard my things as foreign matter."

I asked about "Faust."

"That," said Goethe, "will not again let me loose. I daily think and invent more and more upon it. I have now had the whole manuscript of the second part sewed into books, that it may lie a palpable mass before my eye. The place of the yet wanting fourth act is filled with white paper; and, undoubtedly, what is finished will allure and urge me to complete the whole. There is more than is thought in these matters of sense, and we must come to the aid of the spiritual by all manner of devices."

He sent for the manuscript, and I was surprised to see how much he had written.

"And all," said I, "in the six years that I have been here, amid so many occupations and hinderances! How much a work grows, even if we can only now and then attend to it!"

"Of that one is still more convinced as he grows older," said Goethe; "while youth believes all must be done in one day. Next spring, if fortune favor, and I continue in good health, I hope to get a great way on with this fourth act. It was, as you know, long since invented; only the other parts have, in the mean time, grown so much that I can use only the outline of my first invention for this, and must fill out so as to make it of a piece with the rest."

"A far richer world is displayed," said I, "in this second part than in the first."

"I should think so," said Goethe. "The first part

is almost entirely subjective; it proceeded from that oppressed, impassioned state of the individual character, whose semi-darkness excites such agreeable feelings in the minds of men. But, in the second part, there is scarce any thing of the subjective; here is seen a higher, broader, clearer, more passionless world, and he who has not lived and looked about him some time, will not know what to make of it."

"There may be found exercise for thought," said I; "some learning is also needful. I was glad that I had read Schelling's *Kabirenschrift;* for else had I not known the meaning of that famous passage in the Walpurgis night."

"I have always found," said Goethe, laughing, "that it is well to know something."

Friday, 18th February.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of different forms of government; and it was remarked what difficulties a too liberal form presents, calling forth the demands of individuals, and wishes in such multitudes, that it is hopeless to try to satisfy them. It will be found that the greatest goodness, mildness, and moral delicacy, in those who have the upper places, will not suffice, while they have beneath, a mixed and vicious world to manage and hold in respect.

It was also remarked that the art of governing is a great one, requiring the whole man, and that it is therefore not well for a ruler to have too strong tendencies to other affairs; the fine arts, for instance, by which means not only the interest of the Prince, but the powers of the State must be withdrawn from

what is more necessary. An overruling partiality for the fine arts suits best a rich private man.

Goethe told me that his "Metamorphosis of Plants," with Soret's translation, was going on well, and that, in his supplementary labors on these subjects, particularly on the "Spiral," quite unexpected favorable things had come to his aid from without.

"We have," said he, "as you know, been busy with this translation already more than a year; a thousand hinderances have come in our way; the enterprise has often stood still, quite refractory, and I have often cursed it in silence. But now I could do reverence to those very hinderances; for these delays have given opportunity for excellent men to ripen matters abroad, which now bring the finest water to my mill, and will bring my work to a far better conclusion than I could have imagined a year ago. The like has often happened to me in life; and thence one is led to believe in the interposition of a demoniacal power — a higher influence, which we adore without presuming to explain it."

Saturday, 19th February.

Dined at Goethe's, with Hofrath Vogel. A slight sketch of the island Heligoland had been sent to Goethe, which he read with great interest, telling us what he found important in it.

Vogel told, as news of the day, how the natural small-pox, in defiance of inoculation, had broken out in Eisenach, carrying many off in a short time.

"Nature," said Vogel, "plays us a trick every now and then; and we must waylay her, if our theory is to

keep up with her. Inoculation was thought so sure a remedy, that a law was made to enforce it; but this Eisenach affair, in which the natural followed the artificial disease, makes the remedy suspicious, and weakens the law."

"Yet," said Goethe, "I would enforce inoculation as strictly as before: these little exceptions should not be thought of when compared with the immeasurable benefits it has conferred."

"I think so too," said Vogel, "and am inclined to maintain that, in all such cases as this of Eisenach, the inoculation was imperfect. If inoculation is to be a protection, it must induce fever; mere irritation of the skin, without fever, is not enough. I have, therefore, proposed a measure to-day to the council, which, I think, will insure safety."

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Sunday, 20th February.

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"It is natural to man," said Goethe, "to regard himself as the object of the creation, and to think of all things in relation to himself, and the degree in which they can serve and be useful to him. He takes possession of the animal and vegetable world, and, while he swallows other creatures as his proper food, he acknowledges his God, and thanks the paternal kindness which has made such provision for him. He takes her milk from the cow, honey from the bee, wool from the sheep, and, while he turns these things to his own use, believes they were made for him. Indeed, he cannot believe that the

smallest herb is here, except for his use, and, if he has not yet found out how to serve himself with it, doubts not he shall do so at some future time. But, if he aims at science, he soon finds that progress is inconsistent with such low views.

"These utilitarian teachers say, 'The ox has horns to defend himself.' Then I ask, 'Why has the sheep none? or, if he has, why are they so wrapped up with his ears as to be useless to him?' But it is another thing if I say, 'The ox defends himself with his horns because he has them.'

"Inquiry after the aim, the question *wherefore*, is, at any rate, not scientific. We get a little further with the question *how;* for, if I ask, '*How* is it that the ox has horns?' I am led to examine his organization, and learn at the same time why the lion neither has nor can have horns.

"So has man in his skull two unfilled cavities. The question *wherefore* would not carry us far; but the question *how* teaches us that these hollows are remains of the animal organization frequently to be met in those lower organizations, which man, with all his dignity, has not yet got beyond.

"The teachers of whom I speak would think they lost their divinity, if they did not adore him who gave the ox horns to defend himself with. But let them permit me to venerate him who was so great in the magnificence of his creations, as, after making a thousand-fold plants, to comprehend them all in one; and, after a thousand-fold animals, to make that one which comprehends them all — Man.

"Further, they venerate him who gives the beast

his fodder, and to man meat and drink, as much as he can enjoy. But I worship him who has infused into the world such a power of production, that, if only the millionth part of it should pass out into life, the world must swarm with creatures to such a degree that war, pestilence, fire, and water cannot prevail against them. That is *my* God!"

Monday, 21st February.

Goethe praised Schelling's last discourse, delivered for the satisfaction of the students at Munich.

"It is good through and through," said he; "and we rejoice once again at the distinguished talents which we have long known and admired. In this case he had an excellent subject and a worthy design, and his success has been proportionably great. If the same could be said of the subject and design of his *Kabirenschrift*, that would claim equal praise, he has displayed in it such rhetorical talent and art."

From this we were led to the Walpurgis night.

"The old Walpurgis night," said Goethe, "is monarchical, while the devil is there throughout respected as chief. But the classic Walpurgis night is republican; while all stand on a plain near one another, so that each is as prominent as his associates, nobody is subordinated or troubled about the others."

"And," said I, "the classic assembly is composed of sharply outlined individualities, while, on the German Blocksberg, each individuality is lost in the general witch-mass."

"Therefore," said Goethe, "Mephistophiles knows

what is meant when the Homunculus speaks to him of *Thessalian* witches. One acquainted with ancient times will have many thoughts suggested by these words, (Thessalian witches,) while, to the unlearned, it remains a mere name."

"Antiquity," said I, "must be very living to you, else you could not endow the figures with such fresh new life, and use them with such freedom as you have."

"Without a life-long acquaintance with plastic art," said Goethe, "it would not have been possible to me. The difficulty lay in observing due moderation amid such plenty, and resolutely avoiding figures that did not fit into my plan. I avoided, for instance, using the Minotaur, the Harpies, and other monsters."

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Tuesday, 22d February.

Upper-Consistorial Counsellor Schwabe met me in the street. I walked with him a little way; he told me of his manifold occupations, and I was interested in looking at the sphere of action of this distinguished man. He observed that he employed his spare hours in editing a volume of new sermons; that one of his school-books had lately been translated into Danish, and forty thousand copies of it sold, and that it had been introduced into the best schools of Prussia. He begged me to visit him, which I gladly promised to do.

At dinner, I spoke to Goethe of Schwabe, and he agreed entirely with my praises of him.

"The Grand Duchess," said he, "who always

appreciates the people she has about her so justly, values him at a high rate. You do well to visit him, and I should like to have you ask his permission for me to have a drawing of him for my collection of portraits.

"If you show sympathy in what he is doing and planning, you will have an opportunity of observing a peculiar sphere of action, which cannot be rightly understood, unless by close intercourse with such a man."

Wednesday, 23d February.

I took a drive with Goethe.

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We spoke of the high significance of the original phenomena, (*Urphänomene*,) behind which we believe the Divinity may directly be discerned.

"I ask not," said Goethe, "whether this highest Being has reason and understanding, for I feel that He is Reason, is Understanding itself. Therewith are all creatures penetrated; and man so much so, that he can recognize parts of the Highest."

At table, the efforts of certain inquirers into nature were mentioned to penetrate the organic world by ascending through mineralogy.

"This," said Goethe, "is a great mistake. In the mineralogical world, the simplest, in the organic world, the most complex, is the most excellent. We see, too, that these two worlds have quite different tendencies, and that no stepwise progress from one to the other is to be expected."

I treasured this remark as of great significance.

Thursday, 24th February.

"The difficulty with nature," said Goethe, "is, to see the law where it hides itself from us, and not to be led astray by appearances which are contradicted by our senses. Many things in nature, which are contradicted by our senses, are nevertheless true. That the sun stands still, neither rises nor sets, and that the earth turns about daily with inconceivable swiftness, contradicts our senses as much as any thing can; yet no well-instructed person doubts that it is so. Even such contradictory phenomena are found in the world of plants; and we must take heed lest they lead us astray."

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Monday, 28th February.

I busied myself all day with the manuscript of the fourth volume of Goethe's "Life," which he sent me yesterday, that I might see what was yet to be done to it. I was very happy with this work, thinking what it already is, and what it may become. Some books of it seem quite complete, and leave nothing further to wish. In others may be perceived a certain want of congruity, which may be caused by Goethe's having worked upon them at different times.

All this fourth volume is quite different from the three that precede it. They are, throughout, progressive in a given direction, so that the way passes through many years. In this one, time seems scarce to be in motion, and no decided exertions are perceptible in the principal person. Many things are undertaken, but not finished; many willed, but otherwise

guided; every where we feel a secret influence, a kind of Destiny, drawing out many threads for the web which future years must complete.

This volume, therefore, affords a suitable occasion to speak of that secret, problematical power, which all men feel, which no philosopher explains, and over which the religious help themselves with courageous words.

Goethe names this unspeakable world and life-enigma the Demoniacal (*Dämonische;*) and, while he defines its existence, we feel that so it is, and a curtain seems to have been drawn away from a certain background of our life. We seem to see further and more clearly, but, after a while, perceive that the object is too great and manifold, and that our eyesight cannot penetrate beyond a certain limit.

Man is born only for the Little; only what is known to him can be appreciated by him, or give him pleasure. A great connoisseur understands a picture; he knows how to combine the various particulars with the Universal, which is familiar to him; the whole is, to his mind, as living as any one part. Neither does he entertain a partiality for detached portions; he asks not whether such a face is ugly or beautiful, such a part clear or dark, but whether each be in its place, and in harmony with the law of the whole. Show an ignorant man a picture of some compass, and we shall see that, as a *whole*, it either does not move or confuses him; that some parts attract, others repel him; and that he at last abides by little things which are known to him, praising, perhaps, the execution of a helmet or plume.

But, in fact, we men play more or less the part of this ignoramus before the great destiny-picture of the world. The well-lighted parts, the Agreeable attracts us, the shadowy or unpleasant parts repel us, the whole confuses us, and we vainly seek the idea of a single being, to whom we attribute all these contradictions.

And if it be possible, in human things, to become a great connoisseur, appropriating the art and knowledge of a master, yet, in divine things, this is only possible to a being equal in nature to the Highest. If any one attempts to make such mysteries clear to us, we cannot receive or understand what is offered; but are like that ignoramus before the picture, to whom the connoisseur cannot impart the premises from which he judges by any forms of speech he can use. On this account is it right that forms of religion should not be bestowed directly by God himself, but should, as the work of eminent men, be conformed to the wants and the understanding of the masses. If they were the work of God, no man could understand them; but, being the work of men, they do not express the Inscrutable.

The religion of the highly-cultivated ancient Greeks went no further than to give sensible representations of attributes of this inscrutable essence. As only limited beings were thus produced, and a gap was obvious in the connection of the whole, they invented the idea of a Fate to preside over all. As this again remained a many-sided Inscrutable, the difficulty was rather set aside than met.

Christ thought of a God, comprising all in one,

to whom he ascribed all properties which he found excellent in himself. This God was the essence of his own fair inward being; full of love and goodness, like himself; every way suited to induce good men to give themselves up trustingly to him, and to receive his Idea, as the sweetest connection with a higher sphere. But, as the great being whom we name the Divinity, manifests himself, not in men only, but in a rich, powerful nature, and mighty world-adventures, so, naturally, a representation of him, framed from human attributes, cannot be adequate, and the attentive observer will soon discern imperfections and contradictions, which will drive him to doubt, nay, to despair, unless he be either little enough to let himself be soothed by an artful evasion, or great enough to rise to the stand-point of a higher view.

Such a stand-point Goethe early found in Spinoza; and he acknowledges with joy how truly the views of that great thinker answered to the wants of his youth. In him he found himself, and could therefore fortify himself with Spinoza to the best advantage.

And as their views were not of the subjective sort, but had their foundation in the works and manifestations of God throughout the world, so were they not mere shells which he, after his own later, deeper search into the world and nature, threw aside as useless, but were the root and germ of a plant that grew up in healthy energy through many years, and at last unfolded the flower of a rich knowledge.

His opponents have often accused him of having no faith; but he had not such as theirs, simply because

it was too little for him. If he should speak out his own, they would be astonished; but they would not be able to comprehend him.

But Goethe is far from believing that he knows the highest being as it is. All his written and verbal expressions intimate that it is a somewhat inscrutable, to which men can only obtain approximating perceptions and feelings.

For the rest, Nature and we men are so penetrated by the Divinity, that it holds us; we live, weave, and are in it; that we, under eternal laws, suffer and enjoy; that we practise them, and they are practised on us, whether we recognize them or not.

The child enjoys his cake without knowing who the baker was; the sparrow the cherries, without thinking how they were made to grow.

Wednesday, 2d March.

I dined with Goethe, and, the conversation turning on Demonology, he said —

"The Demoniacal is that which cannot be explained by Reason or Understanding; it lies not in my nature, but I am subject to it."

"Napoleon," said I, "seems to have been of the demoniacal sort."

"He was so," said Goethe; "so thoroughly, and in so high a degree, that scarce any one is to be compared with him. Also, our late Grand Duke was such a nature, full of unlimited power of action, and unrest, so that his own dominion was too little for him, and the greatest would have been too little. Demo-

niac beings of such sort the Greeks reckoned among their demigods."

"Is not this element," said I, "perceptible in events also?"

"In a high degree," said Goethe, "and, indeed, in all which Reason and Understanding cannot explain. It manifests itself in all nature — in the invisible as in the visible. Many creatures are of purely demoniac sort; in many are parts of it effective."

"Has not Mephistophiles," said I, "traits of this nature?"

"No," he replied, "Mephistophiles is too negative a being. The Demoniacal manifests itself in positive active power among artists: it is found often among musicians; more rarely among painters. In Paganini, it shows itself in a high degree; and it is by means of it that he produces such great effects."

I was rejoiced at these remarks, which made more clear to me Goethe's notions of the Demoniacal.

Thursday, 3d March.

Went to Goethe at noon. Found him looking through some architectural designs. He observed it required good courage to build palaces, uncertain as we are how long one stone will remain upon another.

"Those are most fortunate," said he, "who live in tents, or who, like some Englishmen, are always going from one city and inn to another, sure of finding every where a good table ready for *them*."

Dined with Goethe. We talked of children and their naughty tricks, which Goethe compared to the

stem leaves of a plant, which fall away gradually of their own accord; so that it is unnecessary to correct them with great severity.

"Man," said he, "must go through various stages, each bringing with it its peculiar virtues and faults, which, in the epoch to which they belong, may be considered natural, and in a manner right. On the next step you see him another man; there is no trace left of the earlier virtues or faults; others have taken their places. And so on to the final transformation, after which we know not what we shall be."

After dinner, Goethe read me fragments, which he had kept from 1775, of Hanswurst's wedding. Kilian Brustfleck opens the piece with a monologue, in which he complains that Hanswurst's education, despite all his care, has come to no good. This part, and all the others, were written in the tone of Faust. A productive force, powerful even to wantonness, displayed itself in every line; and I could not but lament that it went so beyond all bounds, that even the fragments are not communicable.

Goethe read me the list of the proposed *dramatis personæ*, nearly a hundred in number. All had significant nicknames; some truly ludicrous: some expressed bodily defects, and so distinguished a figure, that it came like life before the eye; others, taken from various follies and vices, gave a deep look into an immoral world. Had the piece been finished, the power must have excited wonder, that could give life to such various symbolical figures within the limits of one invention.

"It was impossible for me to finish the piece,"

said Goethe; "for it demanded a degree of wanton daring, which I had for moments, but which did not lie in the general tenor of my nature, and on which I could not depend. Then our German circle is too limited to favor such an undertaking. On a broad ground, like Paris, one might venture on the giddy whirl; for there a Beranger can live, which would be quite impossible at Frankfort or Weimar."

Tuesday, 8th March.

Goethe had been reading Ivanhoe.

"Walter Scott," said he, "is a great genius; he has not his equal; and we need not wonder at the extraordinary effect he has produced on the reading world. He gives me much to think of; and I discover in him a wholly new art, with laws of its own."

We spoke then of the fourth volume of the biography, and came upon the subject of Demonology before we were aware.

"In poetry," said Goethe, "especially in that which is unconscious, before which Reason and Understanding fall short, and which, therefore, produces effects so far surpassing all expectation, there is always something of the Demoniacal.

"The same is true of music, in the highest degree. Understanding cannot reach its elevation, and influences flow from it which master all, and of which none is able to give himself an account. Therefore cannot religious worship dispense with it; it is one of the chief means of working wonders upon men. It throws itself willingly into significant individuals,

especially when they are in high places, like Frederic and Peter the Great.

"Our late Grand Duke had it to such a degree, that nobody could resist him. He influenced men by his mere tranquil presence, without needing even to show himself good-humored and friendly. All that I undertook by his advice succeeded; so that, when my own mind could not decide, I needed only to ask him, and he instinctively prescribed what was sure of happy results.

"He would have been enviable indeed if he could have possessed himself of my ideas and higher strivings; for when the demon forsook him, and only the human was left, he knew not how to set to work, and was much troubled at it.

"In Byron, also, this element was probably very active, giving him such powers of attraction, especially with women."

"In the idea of the Divinity," said I, by way of experiment, "this power, which we name the Demoniacal, would not seem to enter."

"Dear child," said Goethe, "what know we of the idea of the Divinity? and what can our narrow ideas tell of the Highest Being? Should I, like a Turk, name it with a hundred names, I should still fall short, and, in comparison with the infinite attributes, have said nothing."

Wednesday, 9th March.

Goethe continued his acknowledgments to Sir Walter Scott.

"We read many, too many, poor things," said he; "thus losing our time, and gaining nothing. We should only read what we can admire, as I did in my youth, and as I now experience with Sir Walter Scott. I have now begun "Rob Roy," and will read all his romances in succession. All is great—material, import, characters, execution; and then what infinite diligence in the preparatory studies! what truth of detail in the composition! Here we see what English history is; what an inheritance to a poet able to make use of it. Our German history, in five volumes, is, comparatively, sheer poverty; so that, after Goetz von Berlichingen, writers went immediately into private life, giving us what really was no great gain, an Agnes Vernauerin, and an Otto von Wittelsbach."

I said that I had been reading "Daphnis and Chloe" in Courier's translation.

"That, also," said Goethe, "is a masterpiece, which I have often read and marvelled at, in which Understanding, Art, and Taste, appear at their highest point, and beside which the good Virgil retreats somewhat into the back-ground. The landscape is quite in the Poussin style, and appears, behind the personages, finished, though with very few strokes.

"You know Courier found, in the Florentine Library, a new manuscript, containing the principal passage of the poem which had been lost from the preceding editions. Now, I must acknowledge that I had always read the poem in its imperfect state, without observing or feeling that the apex was wanting. But this may be a proof of the excellence of the

poem, since what we had satisfied us so completely that we never thought of what was wanting."

After dinner, Goethe showed me a drawing, by Coudray, of an extremely tasteful door for the Dornburg Castle, with a Latin inscription, signifying, that he who would enter should find friendly reception and entertainment, and that to him who passed by a happy journey was wished.

Goethe had translated this inscription into a German distich, and placed it as a motto over a letter which he had written, in the summer of 1828, during his residence at Dornburg, to Oberst von Beulwitz. I had heard much in public of this letter, and was very glad when Goethe showed it me, at the same time with the drawing.

I read the letter with great interest, admiring the skill with which he had used the localities of Dornburg to introduce the noblest views suited to raise up man again, however great a loss he may have sustained, and place him on his feet ready for action.

I rejoiced in this letter, observing that it is needless to travel far in search of good material, but that all depends on the strength in the mind of the poet, which is able to produce something valuable from the lowest occasions.

Goethe put the letter and drawing in a portfolio by themselves.

Friday, 11th March.

"It is remarkable in Sir Walter Scott," said Goethe, "how his great descriptive talent sometimes leads him into error. There is a scene in 'Ivanhoe,' where a

company are seated at table in the hall of a castle, by evening light, and a stranger enters. Now, it is right for him to describe the upper part of this stranger's person and dress, but a mistake also to describe his feet, shoes, and stockings. If we sit at table in the evening, and any one comes in, we observe only the upper part of his figure. Describe his feet, and you introduce daylight, destroying the nocturnal character of the scene."

Goethe went on expressing his admiration of Walter Scott. I asked him to put his views on paper; but he declined, observing that art stands so high in this writer that it would be difficult to tell the public what he thought of him.

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Wednesday, 16th March.

Speaking of "William Tell," I expressed my surprise that Schiller should have made such a mistake as to degrade his hero by unworthy treatment of the flying Duke of Swabia, making him judge the Duke so severely, while he boasts of his own deed.

"It would be incomprehensible," said Goethe, "only that Schiller was, like others, subject to the influence of women, and this mistake happened rather from such interference than from his own fine nature."

Friday, 18th March.

We talked of higher maxims, and whether it be advisable or possible to communicate them to other men.

"A disposition to receive what is high," said

Goethe, "is very rare; and, therefore, in common life, a man does well to keep such things for himself, and only to give out what part seems needful to place others at some advantage."

We touched upon the point that many men, especially critics and poets, wholly ignore true greatness, and therefore over-praise mediocrity.

"Man," said Goethe, "recognizes and praises only that which he himself is capable of doing; and those who, by nature, are mediocre, have the trick of depreciating productions, which, if they have faults, have also good points, so as to elevate the mediocre productions which they are fitted to praise."

We spoke of the *Farbenlehre*, and of those German professors who continue to warn their pupils against it as a great error.

"I am sorry, for the sake of many a good scholar," said Goethe; "but, for myself, it is all one; my *Farbenlehre* is as old as the world, and cannot always be calumniated and set aside."

He spoke of Soret's translation of the "Metamorphosis of Plants."

"* * * I have had inserted," said he, "some passages, by valuable young inquirers into nature, in which it is pleasant to see that, among the best people here in Germany, a good style has become so common that you cannot tell which is speaking. The book, however, gives me more trouble than I expected; indeed, I was drawn into the undertaking, almost against my will, by some demoniacal influence which I could not resist."

"You did well," said I, "to yield to the influence;

for this Demoniacal seems so mighty a nature as to be always in the right at last."

"Yet must man," he replied, "exert himself to do his part; and I must, in the present instance, do my work with that care and diligence which my strength and circumstances permit. In such matters, it is like the game which the French call *codille*, where throws of the dice, indeed, decide in a great measure, but placing the pawns judiciously on the table is left to the discretion of the player."

I venerated this good doctrine, and took it to heart, that it might regulate my future actions.

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Monday, 21st March.

We talked on political subjects, — of the incessant disturbances at Paris, and the unwise desire of young people to meddle in the most important affairs of state.

"In England; also," said I, "the students some time ago tried to obtain an influence on the decision of the Catholic question by sending in petitions; but they were laughed at, and no further notice taken of them."

"The example of Napoleon," said Goethe, "has, especially in the young people of France who grew up under that hero, excited a spirit of egotism; and they will not rest until a great despot once again rises up among them, in whom they may see the perfection of what they themselves wish to be. The misfortune is, that a man like Napoleon will not so soon again be born; and I fear that some hundred

thousands of human lives must be wasted before the world can again be tranquillized.

"Of literary operations there can be no thought at present; all that is to be done is quietly to prepare good things for a more peaceful time."

We spoke again of "Daphnis and Chloe." Goethe said that Courier's translation was perfect.

"Courier did well," said he, "to respect Amyot's old translation, and only in parts to improve, to purify, and bring it nearer the original. The old French is so *naïve*, and suits the subject so perfectly, that it would not be easy to make, in any language, a more perfect translation of this book."

We spoke of Courier's own works, — of his little fugitive pieces, and the defence of the famous ink-spots on the manuscript at Florence.

"Courier," said Goethe, "is a great natural genius. He has features of Lord Byron, as also of Beaumarchais and Diderot. He is like Byron in command over all things which may serve him as argument, — like Beaumarchais in his adroitness as an advocate, — like Diderot in dialectic skill, — and it is not possible to be more spirited and witty. However, he seems not to have entirely cleared himself from the ink-spot accusation, and is, in his whole tendency, not sufficiently positive to claim unqualified praise. He is at variance with all the world, and we must suppose that the fault is in part his own."

We spoke of the difference between the German word *Geist*, and the French *Esprit*.

"The French *Esprit*," said he, "means nearly the same with our German word *Witz*. Our *Geist* might,

perhaps, be expressed in French by *Esprit* and *Ame*. It includes the idea of productivity, which is not the case with the French *Esprit*."

"Voltaire," said I, "had a clear idea of that which we name *Geist*. And when *Esprit* does not suffice to express this, what word do the French use?"

"*Génie*," he replied.

"I am reading," said I, "a volume of Diderot, and am astonished by the extraordinary talent of the man. And what knowledge! what a power of language! We see that, in a great animated world, where each was constantly exciting the other to create, and mind and character were kept in such constant action, both must be flexible and strong. But it is extraordinary to see what men French literature could boast in the last century. I am astonished wherever I take a look at it."

"It was the metamorphosis of a hundred-year-old literature," said Goethe, "which had been growing ever since Louis XIV., and stood now in full flower, Voltaire excited the emulation of such men as Diderot, D'Alembert, and Beaumarchais. To be *somewhat* near him, a man needed to be *much*, and could allow himself no holidays."

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As I went, he gave me an essay, by Schrön, on the expected comet, that I might not remain entirely a stranger to such matters.

Tuesday, 22d March.

Goethe read to me passages from the letter of a young friend, now at Rome. Therein figured certain

German artists, with long hair, mustachios, shirt-collars turned over on old-fashioned German coats, tobacco-pipes, and bull-dogs. They do not seem to visit Rome for the sake of the great masters, or to learn any thing. To them Raphael seems weak, and Titian merely a good colorist.

"Niebuhr," said Goethe, "was right in predicting an era of barbarism. It is already here, and we are in the midst of it; for wherein does barbarism consist, unless in not appreciating what is excellent?"

Our young friend also gave an account of the carnival, the choice of the Pope, and the revolution which broke out immediately after.

Horace Vernet ensconces himself like a knight, while some young German artists stay quietly at home, and cut off their beards, which seems to intimate that they may not have made themselves, by their conduct, very popular among the Romans.

We discussed the question whether the errors perceptible in certain young artists of Germany, originated with individuals, and had spread abroad by intellectual contagion, or whether they were the effect of the general tendency of the time.

"They come," said Goethe, "from a few individuals; and the work has been doing these forty years. The doctrine was, the artist needs, chiefly, piety and genius, in order to produce master-pieces. Disciples seized with both hands upon this flattering doctrine. For, to become pious, a man need learn nothing, and genius each one inherited from his lady mother. One need only utter what flatters indolence and conceit,

and he is sure of plenty of adherents among the ordinary set of people."

Friday, 25th March.

Goethe showed me an elegant green elbow-chair, which he had bought to-day at an auction.

"However," said he, "I shall use it little or none; for all indolent habits are against my nature. You see in my chamber no sofa; I sit always in my old wooden chair, and never, till a few weeks ago, have permitted even a leaning-place for my head to be added. If surrounded by tasteful furniture, my thoughts are arrested, and I am placed in an agreeable, but passive state. Unless we are accustomed to them from early youth, splendid chambers and elegant furniture had best be left to people who neither have nor can have any thoughts."

Sunday, 27th March.

The long-expected fine spring weather has come at last. Over the perfectly blue heaven hovers only some little white cloud now and then, and it is warm enough for summer clothing.

Goethe had the table covered in a pavilion in the garden, and we dined once more away from the house. We talked of the Grand Duchess; how she is quietly at work in all directions, doing good, and winning the hearts of all her subjects.

"The Grand Duchess," said Goethe, "has as much intellect and sweetness, as good will; she is truly a blessing to the country. And as men are every where quick to feel whence they receive benefits, worshipping

the sun and kindly elements, I wonder not that all hearts turn to her with love, and that she is speedily known as she deserves to be."

I mentioned that I had begun "Minna von Barnhelm" with the Prince, and observed how excellent it appeared to me.

"Lessing," said I, "has been spoken of as a cold man of understanding; but I find in this drama as much heart, soul, charming naturalness, and free world-culture, of a fresh, cheerful, living man, as any one could desire."

"You may imagine," said Goethe, "what an effect that work produced on us young people at the dark day in which it came out. Truly it was a glittering meteor. It taught us to perceive a higher state of things, of which the weak literary productions of that time gave no idea. The two first acts are models in the art of exposition; from which much has been, and much may still be learned. Now-a-days, indeed, writers are not curious about this art: what was once expected only in the third act, may now be found in the first scene: they are not aware that it is with poetry as in going to sea; we should push from the shore, and reach a certain elevation, before we unfurl all our sails to the wind."

Goethe had some excellent Rhine wine brought, sent by his Frankfort friends as a present on his last birth-day. He told some stories about Merck, and how he could not pardon the Grand Duke for having once praised an ordinary wine as excellent.

"Merck and I," he continued, "were always to one another as Mephistophiles to Faust. Even so

did he mock at a letter written by my father from Italy, in which he complained of the miserable way of living, bad wine, food to which he was unaccustomed, and mosquitoes. Merck could not forgive him, in that delicious country, and surrounded by objects so magnificent, for being troubled about such little matters as eating, drinking, and flies.

"All Merck's ironical ways had, no doubt, their foundation in a high state of culture; only, as he was not productive, but had, on the contrary, a decidedly negative tendency, he was ever more inclined to blame than to praise, and involuntarily was always seeking for means of gratifying this inclination."

We talked of Vogel, and his ministerial talents; of * * *, and his character.

"* * *," said Goethe, "is a man by himself—a man who can be compared with no other. He alone sided with me in opposing the freedom of the press: he stands fast; one can depend on him; he will always abide by what is legitimate."

After dinner, we walked up and down in the garden, taking our pleasure in the snow-drops and crocuses, now in full flower. The tulips, too, are coming out; and we talked of the splendor and costliness of these children of Holland.

"A great flower-painter," said Goethe, "is not now to be expected: we have attained too high a degree of scientific truth; and the botanist, having no eye for picturesque lights and grouping, counts the stamina after the painter."

Monday, 28th March.

I passed some delightful hours with Goethe. He said he had as good as finished his "Metamorphosis of Plants," had turned this morning to the fourth volume of his "Biography," and made an outline of what is yet to be done, adding —

"I may in some sort name myself enviable, in that I am permitted at so advanced an age to write the history of my youth, and, indeed, of an epoch, in many respects, of high significance."

We talked over the particulars, which were perfectly familiar both to him and me.

"In the description of your love for Lili," said I, "we no way miss your youth; rather have such scenes the very breath of earlier years."

"It is," said Goethe, "because those scenes are poetical; and I can, by the power of poetry, supply the want of the youthful feelings of love."

He spoke also of his sister.

"What relates to her," said he, "will be read with interest by accomplished women, of whom many, like her, do not combine the advantage of personal beauty with their intellectual and moral endowments."

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Tuesday, 29th March.

We talked of Merck.

"The late Grand Duke," said Goethe, "was very partial to Merck, so much so that he once became his security for a debt of four thousand dollars. Very soon Merck, to our surprise, gave him back his bond.

As Merck's circumstances were not improved, we could not divine how he had been able to do this. When I saw him again, he explained the enigma thus —

"'The Duke,' said he, 'is an excellent, generous man, who trusts and helps men whenever he can. So I thought to myself, "Now, if you cozen him out of his money, that will prejudice a thousand others; for he will lose his precious trustfulness, and many unfortunate but worthy men will suffer, because one was worthless." So I made a speculation, and borrowed the money from a scoundrel, whom it will be no matter if I do cheat; but if I had not paid our good lord, the Duke, it would have been a pity.'"

We laughed at the whimsical greatness of the man.

"Merck had a habit," continued Goethe, "of continually shouting *he*, *he*, as he talked. This grew upon him, with advancing years, till at last it became like the bark of a dog. He fell at last into a hypochondriacal gloom, the consequence of his many speculations, and finished by shooting himself. He imagined he must become bankrupt; but they found his affairs by no means in so bad a state as he had supposed."

Wednesday, 30th March.

We talked again of the demoniacal element.

"It throws itself willingly into figures of importance," said Goethe, "and prefers somewhat darkened times. In a clear prosaic city, like Berlin, for instance, it would scarcely find occasion to manifest itself."

In this remark Goethe expressed what I had been thinking some days since. This gave me the pleasure we always feel in finding our thought confirmed.

Yesterday and this morning I had been reading his "Biography," and fared like one who, after making progress in a foreign language, reads again a book, which he thought he understood in an earlier day, but now first perceives its minute touches and delicate shades.

"Your 'Biography,'" said I, "is a book by which you see our culture greatly assisted."

"Those are mere results from my life," said he; "the particular facts that are related serve only to confirm a general reflection, or higher truth."

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"I named the book *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, (Poetry and Truth,) because it raises itself by higher tendencies from the region of a low Reality. Now has Jean Paul, in the spirit of contradiction, written *Wahrheit aus meinem Leben*, (Truth out of my Life;) as if the *truth* from the life of such a man could be any other than that the author was a Philistine. But the Germans do not easily understand how to receive any thing out of the common course, and what is of a high nature often passes them by without their being aware of it. A fact of our lives is valuable, not according as it is true, but as it is significant."

Thursday, 31st March.

Dined at the Prince's with Soret and Meyer. We talked of literary matters. Meyer gave an account of his first acquaintance with Schiller.

"I was walking with Goethe," said he, "in the place called Paradise, near Jena, where we met Schiller, and conversed with him for the first time. He had not then completed Don Carlos; he had just returned from Swabia, and seemed very sick, and in a state of nervous suffering. His face was like the pictures of the Crucified One. Goethe thought he could not live fourteen days; but, as his situation became more agreeable, he grew better, and, indeed, wrote all his best things after that period."

Meyer then related some traits of Jean Paul and Schlegel, — both of whom he met at a public house in Heidelberg, — and pleasant stories about Italy, which entertained us highly.

I always feel happy near Meyer; probably because he is a self-relying, satisfied person, little affected by the circumstances which surround him, but, at suitable intervals, uttering the feelings of his happy, inward existence. He is every where well grounded, possesses great treasures of knowledge, and a memory to which the most remote events are as present as if they happened yesterday. He has a preponderance of understanding, which might make us dread him, if it did not rest upon the noblest culture; but, as it is, his quiet presence is always agreeable, always instructive.

Friday, 1st April.

Goethe showed me a picture, in water colors, by Herr von Reutern, representing a young peasant, who, in the village market, stands beside a female basket-seller. The young man is looking at the baskets

which lie before him, while two women, who are seated, and a buxom girl, who is standing by, look with an expression of pleasure at the handsome young man. The composition of the picture was so graceful, the expression of the figures so true and *naïve*, that one could not be weary of looking at it.

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"Simpletons," said Goethe, "say Von Reutern has nobody but himself to thank in his art; he has done every thing for himself; as if a man got any thing from himself but ignorance and awkwardness. If Von Reutern had no nominal master, yet has he been acquainted with excellent masters, and has from them and their great predecessors, and omnipresent nature, learnt what is now his. Nature gave him excellent talents, which Art and Nature have unfolded. He is admirable, in many respects unique; but they should not say he has all from himself. This may be said of a bad artist, never of a good."

He then showed me, from the same artist, a rich frame, painted with various colors, and gilt, having in the midst a space left free for writing. Above was a building in the Gothic style; on both sides, rich arabesques, with landscapes and domestic scenes interwoven; beneath, a gay wood party, with the freshest verdure and turf.

"Von Reutern," said he, "wishes that I should write something in the place he has left open; but his frame is so splendid, and so rich in art, that I fear lest I spoil the picture by my hand-writing. I have composed some verses for the occasion, and have been thinking whether I had not better have them copied

there by a caligrapher, and only subscribe them with my own hand. What should you advise?"

"If I were Von Reutern," said I, "I should be grieved to have them in the hand of another; happy, if in your own. The painter has made the frame so rich in art, that none is needed in the writing; it is only important that it should be in your own hand. I advise you not to use the Roman, but the German text; for your hand has in that a more peculiar character, and it harmonizes better with the Gothic designs in the frame."

"You may be right," said Goethe; "and in the end it will be my shortest way. Perhaps to-day will bring a courageous moment, in which I may venture upon it. But if I make a blot on the beautiful picture," added he, laughing, "you shall answer for it."

"Write only," said I, "and it will be well, however it be."

Tuesday, 5th April.

"In Art," said Goethe, "we meet not easily a talent that gives us more pleasure than that of Neureuther. Few artists know how to confine themselves to what they can do well; most are constantly trespassing beyond the circle in which Nature intended them to work. But of Neureuther, we can say that he stands *above* his talent. All the departments of nature are at his command; he draws ground, rocks, and trees, with as much skill as men or animals, and, while he lavishes such wealth on slight marginal drawings, seems to play with his capabilities, and that pleasure which is wont to accompany the spending a rich

income in a free and easy manner, passes over to the spectator.

"No one can vie with him in these marginal drawings; even the great talent of Albert Dürer has been less his pattern than his excitement. I will send a copy of these drawings to Scotland, to Mr. Carlyle, and hope they will prove no unwelcome present to that friend."

Monday, 2d May.

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Goethe spoke of a certain well-known writer.

"His is a talent," said he, "which, independent of its alliance with party hate, would have produced no effect. There are many such instances in literature, where hatred supplies the place of genius, and where vulgar abilities make a sensation by lending themselves to be the organ of a party. So we find in life a multitude of persons who have not character enough to stand by themselves: these enlist in some party, and thus feel stronger and make some figure. Béranger, on the other hand, is a genius sufficient to itself, and therefore has never served any party. He enjoys too much satisfaction in his inner life, for the world to have power over him, either to give or to take away."

Sunday, 15th May.

Dined with Goethe alone in his work-room. After much pleasant conversation, he rose and took from his desk a written paper.

"One," said he, "who has, like myself, passed the

age of eighty, has hardly a right to live, and ought each day to hold himself ready to be called away. I have, as I lately told you, appointed you in my will as the editor of my literary legacy, and have this morning drawn up a sort of contract, which I wish you to subscribe with me."

He placed before me the paper, in which I found myself, with certain stipulations and conditions, appointed the editor of the works, partly finished and partly not, which were to be published after his death. I had come to an understanding with him upon essentials, and we both signed the contract.

I supposed the material, which I had already from time to time been busy in revising, might make out fifteen volumes.

"It may chance," said Goethe, "that the publisher is unwilling to go beyond a certain number of volumes, and that some part of the materials cannot be used. In that case, omit the polemics of my *Farbenlehre*. My peculiar doctrine is contained in the theoretical part; and there is enough of polemics in the historical, as the leading errors of the Newtonian theory are pointed out there. I nowise disavow my severe dissection of the Newtonian maxims; it was necessary at the time, and will, also, have its value hereafter; but, at bottom, all polemical activity is repugnant to my disposition, and I can take but little pleasure in it."

We also talked about the best way of disposing of the Maxims and Reflections, which had been printed in the second and third volumes of the *Wanderjahre*.

When he began to work over and finish this romance, which had, originally, been published in one volume, Goethe intended to expand it into two, and so announced it for the new edition. But, as the manuscript grew beneath his hands more than he expected, and as his secretary wrote it out in so loose a way as to spread it over more paper than was necessary, he was deceived into thinking he had enough for three volumes, and sent it so arranged to the publishers. But when the press had reached a certain point, it was found that Goethe had made a miscalculation, and that the two last volumes would be too small. They sent for more manuscript, and, as the course of the whole could not be altered, and no new novel could be invented, written, and inserted, on the spur of the occasion, Goethe was much perplexed about filling up the space.

He sent for me, told me the difficulty, and mentioned, at the same time, what means had occurred to him for helping himself out of the difficulty. He showed me two large bundles of manuscript, saying —

"In these two parcels you will find various hitherto unpublished and unfinished works, essays on natural science, art, literature, and life, all mingled together. Suppose you should prepare from these six or eight sheets, to fill the gap in my romance. Though, closely looked to, they do not belong there, yet, as Makaria's Archive is mentioned, an excuse is afforded for inserting them; and thus we shall not only get over the present difficulty, but find a vehicle for

introducing to the world a number of interesting things."

I prepared them, accordingly, with speed, and Goethe seemed well satisfied with the course I had adopted. I put together the whole in two parts, one under the title "From Makaria's Archive;" the other, under the head "According to the Thoughts of the Wanderer." And, as Goethe, just at this time, had finished two fine poems, one *Auf Schiller's Schädel*, and the other *Kein Wesen kann zu nichts zerfallen*, he was desirous also to bring out these poems, and we added them at the close of the two divisions.

But when the *Wanderjahre* came out, no one knew what to make of all this. The progress of the romance was seen to be interrupted by a parcel of enigmatical sayings, whose explanation could be expected only from men of a certain class, such as artists, literati, and natural philosophers, and which greatly annoyed all other readers, especially lady readers. And the two poems were as far from being understood as may be supposed when found so out of place. Goethe laughed at all this.

"What is done is done," said he to-day, "and all you have to do is, in a future edition, to insert these things in their proper places, and republish the *Wanderjahre* in two volumes, according to my original intention."

We agreed that I should arrange all that belonged to Art, Nature, Literature, and Ethics, each in a volume, under a suitable title.

Wednesday, 25th May.

We talked of "Wallenstein's Camp." I had often heard that Goethe had assisted in the composition of this, and, in particular, that the Capuchin sermon came from him. To-day, I asked him, and he replied —

"At bottom, it is all Schiller's own work. But, as we lived in such a relation that Schiller not only told me his plan, and talked it over with me, but also communicated what he did from day to day, hearing and using my remarks, I may be said to have had some share in it. As to the Capuchin's sermon, I sent him a discourse, by Abraham a Sancta Clara, and he immediately prepared his with great talent.

"I scarcely remember any passages to have come from me except the two verses —

'Ein Hauptmann den ein andrer erstach
Liess mir ein paar glückliche Würfel nach,'

For, wishing to give some motive for the peasant's use of the false dice, I wrote down these lines in the manuscript with my own hand. Schiller did not trouble himself about that, but, in his bold way, gave the peasant the dice without inquiring how he came by them. A careful linking together of motives was, as I have said, not in his way; whence, perhaps, his pieces had so much the greater effect on the stage."

Sunday, 29th May.

Goethe told me of a boy who could not tranquillize himself after he had committed a trifling error.

"I was sorry to observe this," said he; "it shows a too great tenderness of conscience, which values so highly the peculiar moral self that it will excuse nothing in it. Such a conscience makes hypochondriacal men, unless it is balanced by great activity."

A nest of young hedge-sparrows, with one of the old birds, had lately been brought me. I saw with admiration the bird not only continue to feed the young in my chamber, but, when set free through the window, return to take charge of them. Such parental love, superior to danger and imprisonment, moved me deeply, and I, to-day, expressed my feelings of surprise to Goethe.

"Simple man!" he replied, with a meaning smile; "if you believed in God, you would not wonder.

"'*Ihm ziemt's, die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,*
Natur in Sich, Sich in Natur zu hegen,
So dass, was in Ihm lebt, und webt, und ist,
Nie Seine Kraft, nie Seinen Geist vermisst.'

"He from within lives through all Nature rather,
Nature and Spirit fostering each other;
So that what in Him lives, and moves, and is,
Still feels His power, and owns itself still His."

"Did not God inspire the bird with this all-powerful love for his young, and did not similar impulses pervade all animate nature, the world could not subsist. But even so is the divine energy every where diffused, and divine love every where active."

So, a few days since, when a model from Myron's cow, with the suckling calf, was sent him by a young artist —

"Here," said he, "we have a subject of the highest sort — the nourishing principle which upholds the world, and pervades all nature, is brought before our eyes by this beautiful symbol. This, and others of a like nature, I esteem the true symbols of the omnipresence of God."

Monday, 6th June.

Goethe showed me the till now wanting beginning of the fifth act of "Faust." I read to the place where the cottage of Philemon and Baucis is burnt, and Faust, standing by night on the balcony of his palace, perceives the smoke, which is borne to him by a light breeze.

"These names of Philemon and Baucis," said I, "transport me to the Phrygian coast, recalling the famous couple of antiquity. But this scene belongs to modern days, and a Christian land."

"My Philemon and Baucis," said Goethe, "have nothing to do with the ancient characters and their story. I gave this couple the names merely to mark their characters. The persons and relations being similar, the use of the names has a good effect."

We then spoke of Faust, whom his hereditary portion of discontent has not left in his old age, and whom, amid all the treasures of the world, and in a new dominion of his own making, a couple of lindens, a cottage, and a bell, which are not his, have power to annoy. He is therein not unlike Ahab, King of Israel, who fancied he possessed nothing, unless he could also make the vineyard of Naboth his own.

"Faust," said Goethe, "should, according to my

design, appear just a hundred years old in the fifth act; and perhaps it would be well, in some passage, expressly to say so."

We then spoke of the conclusion, and Goethe directed my attention to the passage —

> "Delivered is the noble spirit
> From the control of evil powers;
> *Who ceaselessly doth strive must merit*
> *That we should save and make him ours:*
> Celestial *Love* did never cease
> To watch him from its *upper sphere;*
> The children of eternal peace
> Bear him to cordial welcome there."

"These lines," said he, "contain the key to Faust's salvation. In himself, an activity becoming constantly higher and purer, eternal love coming from heaven to his aid. This harmonizes perfectly with our religious view, that we cannot obtain heavenly bliss through our own strength, unassisted by divine grace.

"You will confess that the conclusion, where the redeemed soul is carried up, was difficult to manage; and that I, amid these supersensual matters, about which we scarce have even an intimation, might easily have lost myself in the vague, if I had not, by means of sharply-drawn figures and images from the Christian church, given my poetical design the desirable form and compactness."

In the following weeks, Goethe finished the fourth act; so that, in August, the second part was entirely finished and sewed together. Goethe was extremely

happy in having attained this object towards which he had been striving so long.

"My remaining days," said he, "I may now consider a free gift; and it is truly of little consequence what I now do, or whether I do any thing."

Wednesday, 21st December.

Dined with Goethe. The question came up why his *Farbenlehre* had not spread abroad more extensively.

"It is not easily to be propagated," said he; "because it must, as you know, not only be read and studied, but also be *done*, which is difficult. The laws of poetry and painting are also communicable up to a certain degree; but, to be a good poet or painter, genius is required, which is not communicable. To receive a primitive phenomenon in its simplicity, to recognize its high significance, and work with it accordingly, demands a productive intellect, capable of taking a wide survey, and is a rare gift, only to be found in highly-favored natures.

"And even this is not enough. For, as no man, with all the rules, and all the genius requisite, is a painter, except by unwearied practice, so with the *Farbenlehre* — it is not enough that the disciple know the true laws, and have a suitable intellect, unless he is continually busy observing, combining, and drawing inferences from the individual, often very mysterious, phenomena."

* * * * * * * *

After dinner, we looked at some landscapes, by Poussin.

"Those places," observed Goethe, "on which the painter throws the principal light, do not admit of detail in the execution; and, therefore, water, masses of rock, bare ground, and buildings, are most suitable subjects for the reception of the principal light. Things, on the contrary, which require more detail, should not be used by the artist in those light places.

"A landscape-painter should possess various sorts of knowledge. It is not enough for him to understand perspective, architecture, and the anatomy of men and animals; he must also have some insight into botany and mineralogy, that he may know how to express properly the characteristics of trees, plants, and the different sorts of mountains. It is not, indeed, necessary that he should be an accomplished mineralogist, since he has to do chiefly with lime, slate, or sandstone mountains, and only needs know in what forms they lie, how they are acted upon by the atmosphere, what trees thrive, and what are stinted of their growth upon them."

He showed me then some landscapes, by Hermann von Schwanefeld, making various remarks upon the art and personality of that eminent man.

"We find in him," said he, "art and inclination more completely identified than in any other. He has a deep love for nature, and a divine tranquillity, which pass into us as we look upon his pictures. He was born in the Netherlands, and studied at Rome, under Claude Lorraine. On this master he formed himself, and unfolded his fine capacities with perfect success."

We looked into an "Artist's Lexicon," to see what

was said of Von Schwanefeld, and found him censured for not having equalled his master.

"The fools!" said Goethe; "Von Schwanefeld was a different man from Claude Lorraine, and the latter could not boast of being the better of the two. If there were nothing more in one's life than is told by your writers of biographies and lexicons, it would be a bad business, not worth the trouble it costs."

At the close of this, and in the beginning of the next year, Goethe turned again to his darling studies, the natural sciences, and, at the suggestion of Boisserée, occupied himself with inquiries into the laws of the rainbow; and also, from sympathy with the dispute between Cuvier and St. Hilaire, with subjects referring to the metamorphoses of the plant and animal world. Also, he aided me in revising the historical part of the *Farbenlehre*, taking also lively interest in a chapter on the blending of colors, which I, by his desire, was arranging to be inserted in the volume upon the theory.

During this time, there was no lack of interesting conversations between us, or of valuable utterances on his side. But, as he was daily before my eyes, fresh and energetic as ever, I fancied this must always be so, and was too careless of recording his words, till, on the 22d March, 1832, I, with thousands of noble Germans, was called to weep for his irreparable loss.

The following I noted down shortly after, from memory: —

Early in March, 1832.

Goethe mentioned at table that he had received a visit from Baron Carl Von Spiegel, with whom he was uncommonly well pleased.

"He is a very fine young man," said Goethe; "in his mien and manners the nobleman is seen at once. He can as little dissemble his descent as another man could his intellect; for both birth and intellect give their possessor a stamp which no incognito can conceal. Like beauty, these are powers which one cannot approach without some feeling of their high nature."

Some days later.

We talked of the Greek idea of Destiny, as exhibited in their tragedy.

"It does not suit our way of thinking," said Goethe; "it is obsolete, and contradicts our views of religion. If a modern poet introduces those antique ideas into his dramas, he gives them an air of affectation. The dress is, long since, out of fashion, and suits us as ill as the Roman toga would.

"It is better for us moderns to say with Napoleon, 'Political Science is Destiny.' But let us beware of fancying, with our late literati, that politics are poetry, or a suitable subject for the poet.

"The English poet Thomson wrote a very good poem on the Seasons, a very bad one on Liberty; and, truly not from want of poetry in the poet, but in the subject.

"If a poet would work politically, he must give

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garment. His faithful servant, Frederic, opened for me the chamber in which he was laid out. Stretched upon his back, he reposed as if in sleep; profound peace and security reigned in the features of his noble, dignified countenance. The mighty brow seemed yet the dwelling-place of thought. I wished for a lock of his hair; but reverence prevented me from cutting it off. The body lay naked, only wrapped in a white sheet; large pieces of ice had been placed around, to keep it fresh as long as possible. Frederic drew aside the sheet, and I was astonished at the divine magnificence of the form. The breast was so powerful, broad, and arched; the limbs full, and softly muscular; the feet elegant, and of the most perfect shape; nowhere, on the whole body, a trace either of fat or of leanness and decay. A perfect man lay in great beauty before me; and the rapture which the sight caused, made me forget, for a moment, that the immortal spirit had left such an abode. I laid my hand on his heart — there was a deep silence — and I turned away to give free vent to my tears.

THE END.

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